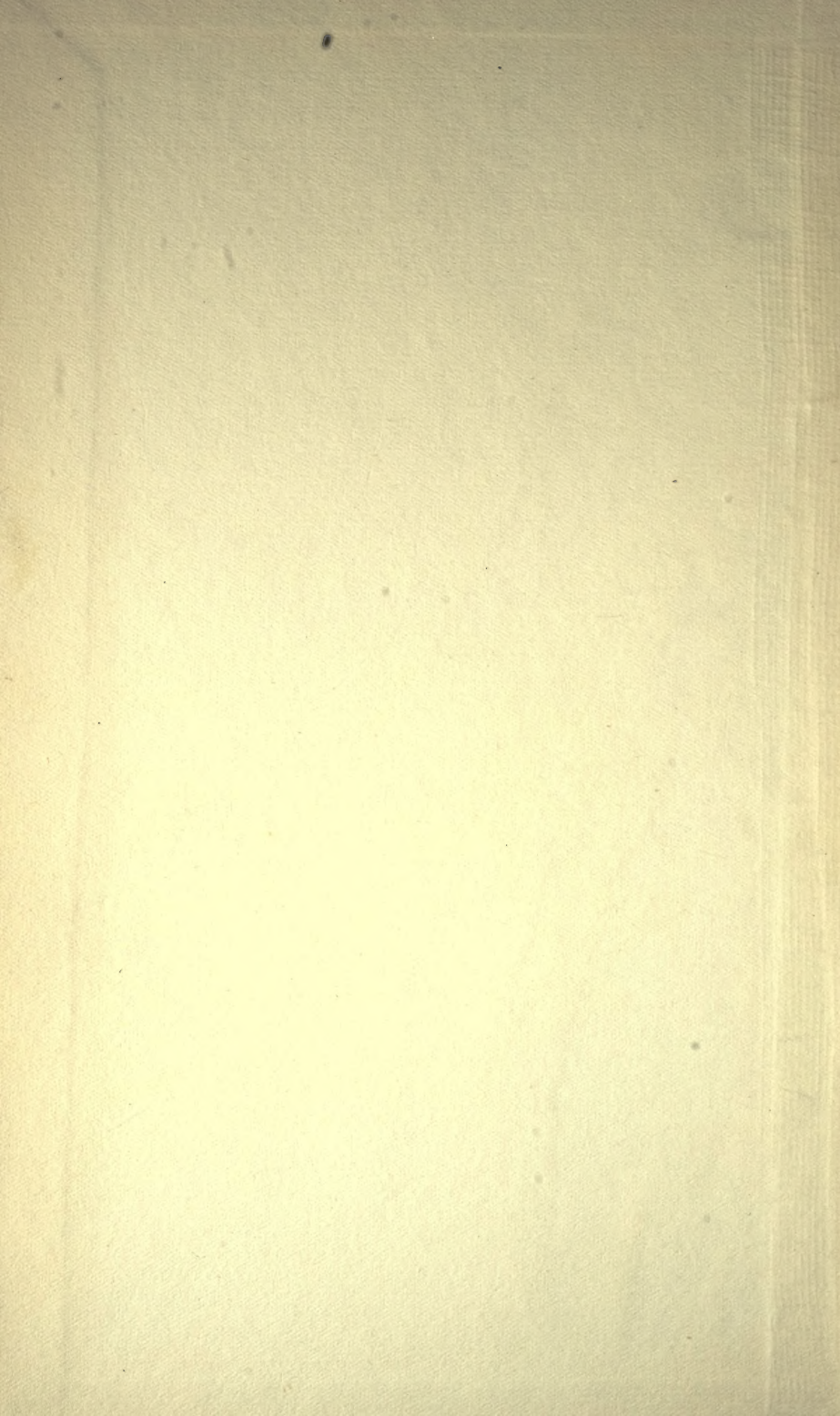



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THE GREAT CONDÉ



The Great Condé in 1653
From a portrait by the younger Teniers, at Chantilly

Emery Walker Del.

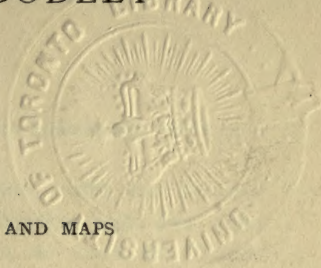
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THE GREAT CONDÉ

A LIFE OF LOUIS II DE BOURBON
PRINCE OF CONDÉ

BY THE HONOURABLE
EVELINE GODLEY

WITH PORTRAITS AND MAPS



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LONDON
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET

1915



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Question. What do you say concerning valour and courage?

Answer. I say, it is a most noble and heroicall vertue, that makes some men differ from others, as much as all men differ from beasts.

The Souldiers Catechism, 1644.

PREFACE

I TAKE this opportunity of expressing my most sincere thanks to all who have helped me in my work. For the practical kindness and courtesy shown by M. Macon, Curator of Chantilly, and guardian of its priceless archives, I cannot be too grateful. To M. Omont, of the Bibliothèque Nationale in Paris, I owe a like acknowledgment for his unfailing and ready help during my study of the manuscripts under his charge. In the parts of the work relating to military matters, I have had invaluable assistance from Major-General Sir Alexander Godley, K.C.M.G.; while the passages dealing with contemporary history have been kindly read and criticised by Mr. Geoffrey Headlam, of Eton College.

Among many who have given me the benefit of advice and sympathy, I must first mention my father, Lord Kilbracken. I am also deeply indebted to Lady Burghclere, whose studies on the history of the seventeenth century are well known; to The Hon. Mrs. Walter James; to Miss Katharine Mathew; to my aunt, Miss Godley; and to my brother-in-law, Mr. John Coleridge.

With regard to information from manuscript sources, I have done my best to ascertain which of the many extracts in this book are now published for the first time, and to distinguish them accordingly; but if, in any case, it is shown that I have made the claim unjustly, I hereby apologise beforehand.

EVELINE GODLEY.

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ERRATA

On page 77, *for* Mercaur *read* Mercœur.

On page 34, *for* Sarrazin *read* Sarasin.

On page 90, *for* Palluau *read* Paluau.

On page 259 (note), *for* Comte de Dunois *read* Comte de St. Paul.

On pages 132 and 136, *for* Flemish *read* Walloon.

An asterisk prefixed to a footnote signifies reference to unpublished material.

THE GREAT CONDÉ

PART I

CHAPTER I

CHILDHOOD AND EDUCATION

1621-1637

"LA Magnifique et Superbe entrée de Monseigneur le duc d'Anguien en la ville de Bourges, en attendant le jour heureux de son baptême". Thus is recorded the first public appearance of Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien;¹ called, by succeeding ages, 'the Great Condé'. The impressive titles of his later years are thus given in full by an early biographer: "Louis de Bourbon; Second du Nom; Prince de Condé; Premier Prince du Sang; Surnommé le Grand".

The Princes of the branch of Bourbon-Condé traced their descent in direct line from St. Louis.² The coveted distinction, 'First Prince of the Blood', had come to them with the accession of their kinsman Henri iv; it was bestowed, at that time, upon Henri de Bourbon, third Prince of Condé, who, until the birth of a son to the King, stood next in succession to the throne. At Court, or elsewhere, the head of their family was known pre-eminently as 'the Prince', 'Monsieur le Prince'.³ His eldest son, the Duc d'Enghien, was recognised as 'Monsieur le Duc'; by which undisputed title the Great Condé was known for the first twenty-five years of his life.

¹ The name was formerly written Anguien, or Anguyen.

² See Appendix A.

³ Saint-Simon (ed. Chéruel, vii. 160) ascribes the origin of this title to the custom of the Huguenots, who invariably applied it to their leader, the first Prince of Condé.

May the 5th, 1626, was the happy day of M. le Duc's baptism. It had been deferred for no less than four years and eight months; the date of his birth was September 7th, 1621. Such delay was not uncommon in the case of state Christenings; perhaps on account of the extreme length and trying nature of the ceremony. Louis XIV himself, like his cousin of Enghien, was not formally baptized till he was nearly five years old; at which ripe age a Prince of the Blood was expected to be capable of playing his part on any public occasion. Henri II de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, and father of Monseigneur le Duc, had lately been appointed Governor of the provinces of Berry and Burgundy; an office which gave him the opportunity of having his little son received into the Church with royal honours. King Louis XIII, as god-father, gave his own name to the child. The service was to be held at Bourges, the capital of Berry, in the splendid Cathedral of St. Etienne; and the inhabitants, delighted at this compliment paid them by their Governor, spared no pains to prepare appropriate rejoicings.

On the morning of May 2nd, M. le Duc, magnificently dressed in blue velvet and silver, arrived at the open space outside the town, known as the 'grand Credo'; where he dined with the chief nobles of the province, and also received 'harangues', or addresses, from various deputations. The Prince, his father, was present, but, with commendable tact, kept himself in the background ('se tenoit un peu à l'escart'); and the Duke, unsupported, bore himself with that complete assurance which seldom deserted him in after life. One charming feature of the proceedings was the entrance of a regiment of small children "all dressed alike, armed with little pikes and swords, wearing ribbons of their Prince's colours, and led by captains, lieutenants, and ensigns, all of the same age". After the 'harangues' had been delivered, a procession was formed, to escort the Duke, who was carried in a litter. First went the 'Prévôt Provincial', covered with gold tinsel, and his lieutenants, 'vestus à l'avantage'; the 'archers', who were in reality a corps of cavalry, in crimson velvet, carrying pistols and carbines. Then followed a great array of religious orders; Capuchins, Cordeliers, Carmelites, Minims, Jacobins, and Augustines; and the clergy of the different chapters con-

nected with the town. Every few yards they were met by fresh detachments, who came out with greetings for M. le Duc ; always beginning with the same solemn rhetoric : " Monseigneur, les anciens ", or " les Romains ", etc. etc., and never including a single sentence which it seemed possible a child of four could understand. At the gates of the town two silver keys were given him ; farther on, under a great triumphal arch, ' a beautiful child, clothed in white satin ', presented solid silver figures of a shepherd, three sheep, and a dog, in allusion to the arms of Bourges, and the chief industry of Berry. The Jesuit fathers had erected an open-air stage in front of their College, where a short interlude was performed, ' pour le contentement de ce jeune prince '. After so many serious discourses, it is a relief to hear that the piece was of a cheerful nature, ' pleine de réjouissance et d'allégresse '. At length the Cathedral was reached, and here the Archbishop, in his Pontifical vestments, with all the Canons, came out to meet the Duke, and led him into the Choir, while a Te Deum was sung, ' with the music of voices and instruments '. Three days later, the actual Christening took place. M. le Duc spared his god-parents all responsibility by making the responses audibly for himself, and repeating the Creed, in Latin, from beginning to end.¹

Henri de Bourbon was not an affectionate father ; but he held most decided and practical views on the subject of education, and he was thoroughly determined that the most should be made of his son's mental gifts. Like all the heads of great princely houses at that date, he looked upon the younger members of his family simply as his tools ; the more intelligent and capable they were, the more influence he could obtain through them. Not that he had any vast ambition to gratify ; his chief anxiety was to be rich,—his avarice was a byword,—and to be preferred, for lucrative posts, before the Princes of Lorraine and Vendôme, or the Soissons branch of the Bourbons. Among this insatiable crowd of minor royalty, Henri de Bourbon might be singled out as representing, in his own person, nearly all the worst faults of his kind. He was servile as well as grasping ; without dignity and without principle. Even superficial gifts were denied him.

¹ The details of M. le Duc's christening ceremony are taken from a contemporary pamphlet in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

He had not the frankly commanding aspect of his forefathers ; that ' air relevé ' which the Great Condé seems to have inherited from his more distant ancestors ; and which, in former years, had caused the English King, Henry VIII, to say of Charles de Bourbon : " I would not be master to that subject of my brother of France ". Still less could he claim the genial qualities of his grandfather, Louis I of Condé :

" Ce petit homme tant joli
Qui toujours cause et toujours rit,
Et toujours baise sa mignonne,
Dieu gard' de mal le petit homme ! "

Yet this singularly unattractive prince was the husband of one of the most beautiful women in Europe. The story of his marriage, as told by Tallemant des Réaux, is an excellent example of the use which the Kings of France made of their more or less dependent relations. Marie de Médicis, Queen-Consort of Henri IV, had devised a ballet, in which all the most beautiful ladies of the Court were to take part ; among them, Charlotte-Marguerite de Montmorency, a girl of fifteen, daughter of Henri, Duc de Montmorency, and granddaughter of the renowned Constable Anne. Her beauty, it was said, had been celebrated from the time she was four years old. When the moment arrived for choosing the performers, the King and Queen were soon at variance ; in the end, the Queen had her way, but the King, to mark his displeasure, refused to take any further interest in the preparations. " All this time ", says the chronicler, " the practising for the ballet went on without hindrance. Every time the ladies attended a rehearsal, they passed down the gallery in front of the King's apartments ; but he, being angry, no sooner heard them coming than he ordered the doors to be shut ". One day, this order was not strictly carried out, and he caught a glimpse of Mademoiselle de Montmorency as she went by with her companions. Immediately he left his room and followed them, to watch the performance. " Now, the ladies were dressed as nymphs, and at one moment of the dance they lifted their javelins, as if in the act to throw them. Mademoiselle de Montmorency was standing opposite to the King when she raised her dart, and she seemed to pierce him with it ". " From that day forward the

porter had no orders to shut the door, and the King allowed the Queen to do whatever she pleased". His first step was to arrange a marriage which should keep the nymph at Court; and Henri de Bourbon was desired to come forward. Charlotte de Montmorency had many suitors. She was actually betrothed to François de Bassompierre,¹ a young man who seemed to possess all the necessary qualifications for a hero of romance; but, at the King's command, sentiment was thrown to the winds. Bassompierre relinquished his claim, Henri de Bourbon assured himself that the marriage portion was satisfactory, and Mademoiselle de Montmorency became Princess of Condé. Many years later it was said by one who had known them intimately, that "M. le Prince had only given Madame la Princesse two happy days in her life; namely, the day when he married her, and gave her his great rank; and the day of his death, when she regained her liberty and inherited his large fortune".²

It soon proved to be only in public life that the Prince was submissive. As a husband, he showed himself unexpectedly tyrannical; and the Princess, who was timid by nature, became, before long, an obedient wife. When, soon after the accession of Louis XIII, her husband fell into disgrace and was imprisoned at Vincennes, she followed him dutifully. There, in captivity, their four eldest children were born; three sons, who died in infancy, and a daughter, Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, afterwards Duchesse de Longueville. Their fifth child, born in Paris after his father's release, was the Great Condé. "Now that you have a boy, I do not doubt that you are pleased", wrote Louis XIII, who, at that time, was still childless; "and so you have reason to be; these are the favours of Heaven".³

Madame la Princesse was not allowed much voice in the bringing-up of her son. The child was so delicate that for some time he was scarcely expected to live. He was sent from Paris to the Castle of Montrond, in Berry; and, whereas children of his rank were usually entrusted to ladies of quality, he was placed under the charge of two or three 'bourgeoises', 'full of experi-

¹ Afterwards Marshal of France; born 1579; died 1646.

² Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

³ *Archives of Chantilly*, September, 1621.

ence, care, and wisdom'; a measure which, in all probability, saved his life. It would seem, from the accounts of his early childhood, that there never was a more insubordinate little boy; "he resisted, as far as the weakness of his age allowed, the rules for going to bed, for getting up, for meals, and for recreation".¹ Like a true Bourbon, he owned no authority but that of the head of his House. His father was the only person who could be relied on to bring him to reason; and it was by the Prince's order that M. le Duc was soundly punished as often as he deserved it. But if he was troublesome, he was very far from stupid; those in charge of him soon discovered that the more his mind was occupied, the more easily he could be managed. No truer word was ever spoken of him than that of the Jesuit Father Pelletier, when he said of his pupil, "*C'est un esprit auquel il faut de l'emploi*". Therefore, at eight years old, little more than three years after the famous Christening, the Duke was regularly installed as a student at the College of Ste. Marie of Bourges; an arrangement which commended itself greatly to Henri de Bourbon's careful mind. He was able to secure excellent teaching for his son; while his position as Governor freed him from many of the ordinary expenses.

To encourage family affection was no part of the educational scheme. Enghien's intercourse with his relations was limited to an occasional holiday at Mont-rond,—often in the absence of his parents,—and visits from his father. Visits from Madame la Princesse were rare, and subject to restrictions. Henri de Bourbon came often to the capital of his province, and never failed to inquire after his son's progress. He used to question him, and look through his compositions; he also made him dance before him; "in which", says Lenet the secretary, who was often an eye-witness, "he took particular pleasure", as the young prince "excelled in this agreeable exercise".² One short and memorable interval the three children, Enghien, his sister, and his little brother Armand,³ Prince of Conti, spent together at Bourges. This was in the autumn of 1632, while their mother made a desperate journey to beg mercy of Richelieu for her only brother, Henri de Montmorency, famed for 'his valour, his good looks, and his

¹ Désormeaux, *Histoire de la Vie et des Actions de Louis de Bourbon*.

² Lenet, *Mémoires*.

³ Born 1629; died 1666.

magnificence', who was lying under sentence of death for insurrection. Her errand was in vain; Montmorency was beheaded, and most of his friends disgraced. It was M. le Duc's first experience of contemporary politics; he never forgot it, and never forgave Richelieu the part which he had played.

All this while, the idea that the 'First Prince of the Blood' should be educating his son at a public institution, was arousing comment of every kind. Such a decision had never been heard of before. It was looked on, in some quarters, as scarcely less than sacrilege. On the whole, however, popular opinion approved of the innovation. Father Denis Pétau, a distinguished Jesuit scholar, dedicated to the Duke his *Livre de Raison du Temps* or *Rationarium Temporum*, congratulating him openly on being educated so differently from other princes; and received in return an admirably polite letter, thanking him for the compliment, and begging in conclusion "the assistance of your holy prayers for me, so that, by the grace of God, I may imitate the virtues and the innocence of my patron St. Louis".¹ This much-discussed system does not strike the modern mind as dangerously democratic. Instead of living in the College, M. le Duc was established in the most beautiful house in Bourges; the famous Palais Jacques-Cœur, built in the fifteenth century by the treasurer of Charles VII. 'A cuers vaillans, rien impossible,' was the device—sometimes quoted as prophetic,—which the first owner had carved in stone on the façade. The household of M. le Duc was placed under the direction of a 'faithful and well-intentioned' tutor or 'gouverneur', M. de la Buffetière. It included a doctor, an apothecary, and fifteen or twenty servants; besides horses and carriages, and a magnificent state coach painted blue, and lined with crimson velvet, which was presented by the inhabitants of the town on New Year's Day, 1630. Two Jesuit Fathers, Pelletier and Le Maître-Gonthier, were especially chosen to superintend the Duke's studies; "the former", we are told, "of a firmer character and a more austere virtue; the latter, more gentle, more insinuating, *better fitted for dealing with the great*".² In class, the seat occupied by M. le Duc was surrounded by a small gilt balustrade, within whose protecting circle he worked wonders. "No

¹ A.C.

² Désormeaux.

pupil", says the school report for the year 1630, "has shone more brightly than Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien". His example, it was added, 'inflamed all his companions'.

Enghien also appeared with great distinction in the dramatic representations given from time to time by the pupils. His first appearance was in the title rôle of a Latin drama, *Hyacinthus Liberatus*, performed at the prize-giving ceremony of 1630. These representations generally took place in the 'salle des Actes' of the College; but the report that the little Prince was to take a part drew an audience of such overwhelming numbers that the hall of the Palais Jacques-Cœur had to be substituted. The nine-year-old Hyacinthus gave every satisfaction, and, judging by what records we possess, it is not hard to believe that he made an attractive figure. In these early portraits the face is childish and delicate, and the marked features of the Great Condé are still undeveloped; but he has already the lively expression which always distinguished him; besides the thick crop of curly hair which, in after-life, he so rarely attempted to keep as tidy as custom required. Another character, appropriately played by the Duke, was that of 'L'Homme épris de la Gloire', in the interlude *Philotimus et Misotimus*. His crowning performance, however, was in the tragedy of *Astion, Martyr*; an edifying but gloomy piece, given during the Carnival of 1632, and wholly unsuited to that cheerful season. Astion is a young Christian noble, who suffers martyrdom under Diocletian; his persecutor is Latronianus, a tyrant, subsequently 'dragged by furies to the infernal regions'. One copy of the work¹ still in existence gives a complete list of the *dramatis personæ* on this occasion; where the name which, to some loyal minds, was 'sacred and holy' appears in all simplicity:

ASTION	.	.	.	.	.	Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Enghien.
EPICÈTE (companion of Astion)	.	.	.	.	.	René de Mailly.
LATRONIANUS (Prefect of Scythia)	.	.	.	.	.	Claude Deschamps.
An Angel	.	.	.	.	.	Blaise du Boisbreil.

and a host of other characters, ending with 'Louis Pinson, Jean Magistry, and Pierre Quillon', who figure collectively as 'Furies'. 'Astion' was played before a distinguished audience, including Henri de Bourbon, who

¹ Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.



LVDOVICVS BORBONIVS ENGVIIENNENSIVM DVX *Æ. an. 13.*

Dum vultus Lodoice tuus Artæ æmula fingit.

Natura ingenio vincitur Artis opus.

Os pulchrum illa quidem inuenit, sed pulchrius ore

Accidit hæc, certe est ingenio magis.

Boudou genou

C'est à ce coup Louis que l'Art est surmonté

Néjant jamais mieux fait pour avoir l'avantage

La Nature a caché sous vostre beau visage

Un esprit mille fois plus rare en sa beauté.

M. de J.

THE GREAT CONDÉ AS A CHILD, 1633

(From a print in the Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris)

[To face p. 8



was staying in Bourges to be present at the festivities, and who had the pleasure of hearing his son's performance loudly acclaimed.

Some allowance must perhaps be made for 'dealing with the great'; but, even so, it seems likely that Enghien was in truth a promising scholar. His worst enemies never denied him intelligence; and all his life he was known to be a lover of books. From the moment when he sets to work on serious studies there are few complaints of his conduct. Certainly those who were charged to occupy his mind did not spare themselves or their pupil. Special teachers were engaged, to supplement the ordinary course. Father Pelletier's correspondence refers to a most formidable list of subjects: rhetoric, philosophy, logic, physics, mathematics, and other sciences. In April, 1635, the Duke is "preparing himself in the whole study of philosophy, which is not a light task"; "he is well, thanks be to God", the letter continues, "and gives great hope of his piety and his capacities in the future".¹ Examinations were held once a month in class, and once a year in public. Each pupil was required to 'soutenir des thèses'; that is, he was given one or more arguments, on fixed subjects, to support in discussion with the professors, who were called 'les assaillants'. M. le Duc, by his father's express wish,² submitted regularly to these inflictions. One of his prizes, gained in 1633, is still preserved, a copy of St. François de Sales' *Traicté de l'Amour de Dieu*, bound with the arms of Bourbon-Condé on the cover, and an inscription to 'the illustrious prince, Louis de Bourbon', on the fly-leaf.³ Even his letters to his father are written in Latin during these early years; again by the command of that unrelenting Prince, who was never tired of spurring on his son's teachers, till they themselves sometimes begged for mercy. In the summer of 1635 a terrific final examination was held, in which all the successive courses of study were summed up. Among the various theses Enghien was required to support, were twenty-seven 'on Ethics', fifteen 'on Meteors', fifteen 'on the transformation of Substances', and

¹ Father Pelletier to Henri, Prince of Condé, A.C.

² 'Je veux que mon fils soutienne les thèses du mois comme les autres' (Henri, Prince of Condé, to Father Pelletier, A.C.).

³ Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

fifteen 'on Metaphysics'. The discussions were held in public, and the circle of assailants consisted of prelates, and scholars of distinction. But the Duke was nothing if not courageous, and his triumph surpassed all expectations. No wonder that La Fontaine wrote, fifty years later, of 'M. le Prince':

"He has a great love of argument, and never shows so much ingenuity as when he is in the wrong."

Whatever aptitude Enghien may have shown, there can be no doubt that the strain of such a system was very severe for a delicate child; or that his brain power was developed at the expense of his health and nerves. After this final effort, he was so much exhausted that he had to be sent to Montrond for a comparative holiday; but even from here Father Pelletier writes that one of the supplementary professors had been astonished that the Duke was not allowed more leisure, "for recreation and the good of his health". "He told me", he adds, "that I ought to see to it, as no one else concerned themselves about it".² Following this suggestion are vigorous recriminations between Father Pelletier and La Buffetière, the 'gouverneur', whose duty it was to escort the Duke out hunting, on the rare occasions when he was allowed a day's sport. Father Pelletier encouraged this pupil in the idea that this indulgence might be granted rather oftener; and Enghien, nothing loth, persisted, until La Buffetière, exasperated, told him that "he only stayed with him to expiate his own past sins". M. le Duc, just fourteen, and needing no encouragement to assert himself, declared, in return, that his tutor treated him like a lacquey ('comme un faquin') and that his age and rank deserved something better. This heated interview is described by Father Pelletier in an indignant letter to the Prince. It was not without result. Henri de Bourbon seems to have realised that a hired authority was not likely to be effective much longer. Moreover, he did not intend that his son should be too much trained to submission,—except towards parental commands. He would be all the more useful for knowing how to hold his own, on occasion. The course at Bourges had been completed, and it was time for the work of emancipation to begin.

¹ La Fontaine, *Comparaison d'Alexandre, de César, et de M. le Prince*.

² Father Pelletier to Henri, Prince of Condé, A.C.

Enghien took his last leave of Bourges and the College in January, 1636. Six years of subjection, of hard study in a strict religious atmosphere, could hardly fail to leave their mark. Yet in spite of the school report, which speaks of him as 'formed in mind and character'—he was not fifteen!—their influence was less moral than intellectual. Certain hereditary defects of the Bourbon race might be repressed for the moment, but the very strictness and narrowness of the system made a reaction all the more inevitable. The Prince, who "gave great hopes of his piety for the future", and who is named among the members of the 'Congregation of Our Lady',¹—"Louis, Prince de Condé, élevé sous la protection de la Mère de Dieu, à Bourges",—seems a long way from the 'Condé, ce diable' of the Fronde. Nevertheless, the effect of this early training does reappear, now and again, generally to the unconcealed amazement of the spectators. "I have reason to think", writes, naïvely enough, one who was no partisan of 'M. le Prince', "that there was some foundation of goodness in his soul, which on supreme occasions turned him towards God; Whose power he worshipped, though he did not obey His commandments as he ought. I have heard his followers say that he sometimes showed great signs of being susceptible to religion, although he had no reputation for piety".² Further, it may be said that, professed atheist as he appeared for many years, the Great Condé was never indifferent to religion as a subject. He would talk, and argue, on theological matters, even at the time when he was least given to practising the Christian virtues. And let it not be forgotten that it was to an old school-fellow of Bourges, Father Etienne Agard des Champs, that he applied for help in his final conversion.

The fame of the Duc d'Enghien's achievements in learning had been spread abroad before he left the College of Ste Marie. The second, and more worldly, stage in his education was to be a course at the Académie Royale in Paris; but there was an interval between the two, during which he was allowed to visit the chief towns of Berry and Burgundy, and represent his father at various official ceremonies. Auxerre and Dijon

¹ Founded, 1584; tercentenary celebrated, 1884. Among other members were Bossuet, Fénelon, and Marshal de Villars.

² Motteville, *Mémoires*, iv. 103.

received him with public rejoicings, and the customary 'ballets' or masques in his honour are full of allusions to his scholarship. The *Ballet des Sciences et des Arts Libéraux*, at Dijon, was a most ponderous affair. Only a prince who had been inured to addresses since the age of four could have endured it patiently at fourteen, and, without flinching, heard himself addressed as :

" Jeune merveille de nos ans
Prince qui démentez votre age,
Et dont la conduite trop sage
N'est sujette à l'ordre du temps.
Prodige du siècle ou nous sommes,
Esprit d'ange, qui triomphant
Des sciences que font les hommes,
En avez fait un jeu d'enfant ".

But the true bent of this 'young marvel' was already acknowledged. Presently there enters a figure representing 'L'Art Militaire', following the Sciences, of whom she says :

" Mais elles ne se peuvent taire,
Jalouses que vous les quittiez ;
Et généreux vous vous portez
A courtiser l'Art Militaire ".

While in conclusion appears 'M. de Mongey, représentant la Mathématique'; which in those days included the study of fortification and engineering :

" Louis, c'est à moi seule que tu te dois rendre,
Les autres ne font rien que brouiller les esprits,
Si tu te donnes à moi je te ferai comprendre
Des secrets inconnus, dont tu seras épris ".

" Ne t'amuse donc plus qu'aux Sciences utiles ;
Ton age le permet, viens apprendre de moi,
Comme il faut conquérir et conserver les villes,
Quand il faudra servir, et la France, et ton Roi ".

To serve France and their King was the avowed object of nearly all the pupils at the Académie Royale. Incidentally, they were taught to cultivate social gifts, and polite accomplishments. Fencing and horsemanship were two important items ; taught by a certain 'M. Benjamin', who had been the professor of Louis XIII. M. le Duc was naturally a centre of interest ; his rank and his unique upbringing at first attracted attention ; his personality held it. Before long he was surrounded by a circle of friends, some of

whose names are conspicuous in his later career. Nemours,¹ Luynes,² Fiesque,³ Tavannes,⁴ and the brothers of Gramont⁵ and Senecey;⁶ many who fought by Enghien's side in his early campaigns, facing life, death, and every other possibility, with the same light-hearted, irresponsible courage. The severity of Bourges was soon little more than a memory. Instead of the redoubtable examinations, there were tournaments, once a month, in feats of skill. The Duke writes to his father that he has won a horse, 'un assés joli bidet' as the prize for tilting. For his studies he devotes himself chiefly to "the example of those who have been great and wise captains"; "that I may learn by their conduct", he adds, "to make myself what you would wish me to be". The programme of instruction at the Academy shows that physical exercises did not occupy the pupils' whole time. They were required to master "universal history; the establishment, decline, and change of the Empires of the world; the transmigration of races; the foundation and fall of great cities; and the state of modern principalities, especially those of Europe"; this last an eminently practical study.

Among the countless influences which closed round Enghien in his new life, special mention must be given to that of his sister, Anne-Geneviève, 'Mademoiselle de Bourbon'; she was known by this title until her marriage, five years later, to Henri d'Orléans, Duc de Longueville. This marriage is tersely described by one of her relations as "a cruel fate. He was old; she was very young, and as beautiful as an angel".⁷ "It was impossible to see her", writes another contemporary, "without loving her, and wishing to please her".⁸ Anne de Bourbon was two years older than her brother. Like him, she had strong intellectual sympathies; her education with the Carmelites of St Denis had

¹ Louis de Savoie, Duc de Nemours; born 1621; died of typhus fever, 1641.

² Louis-Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes; born 1620; distinguished in action at Arras and elsewhere.

³ François de Fiesque, Knight of Malta; killed at Mardyck, 1646.

⁴ Jacques de Saulx, Comte de Tavannes.

⁵ Henri de Gramont, Comte de Toulangeon, and Philibert, Chevalier de Gramont, who fought at Fribourg, Nordlingen, and Lens.

⁶ Henri and Louis de Bauffremont-Senecey; both killed at La Marfée, near Sedan, 1641.

⁷ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

⁸ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

been scarcely less serious than his with the Jesuits of Bourges. She was now living with her mother at the Hôtel de Condé in Paris, and already the poets were singing her praises.

" L'on jugerait par la beauté
De Bourbon, et par sa fraîcheur,
Qu'elle a pris naissance des lis ".¹

Madame la Princesse particularly affected the society of Madame de Sablé, Madame de Rambouillet, and others of the inner circle of the 'précieuses'; "the most gifted and witty of the Court, and all those who were most exalted both by birth and by merit".² During his schooldays the Duke had seen little or nothing of his mother and sister, whose visits to Bourges had not been encouraged. The Princess was afraid of her husband, but she was none the less fond of her son, and as soon as he was within her reach, she lost no time in establishing intercourse with him. Her advances were vigorously resisted by Father Pelletier, who, instructed by the Prince, was still mounting guard over his pupil. Henri de Bourbon was a jealous parent, with a profound experience of Court manners and customs. He mistrusted all influences not directed by himself; less on moral grounds than because he was resolved that his son should be no one's tool but his own. In the struggle which followed, M. le Duc must have learnt much that was at least as useful to him as the universal history, and transmigration of races, included in the school curriculum.

Sometimes Father Pelletier records a victory for himself, giving a lively idea of the methods he used, and the example he set before his pupil. Writing from Paris, in 1637, he said, "Yesterday M. le Duc had a disappointment which he showed a good deal. Madame (la Princesse) had sent to ask after him, and had told him secretly that she would send to fetch him, and that he should be amused by a little comedy which was to be played by Mademoiselle his sister, and some others". The comedy in itself was likely to be harmless, for Mademoiselle de Bourbon, and her friends of the Hôtel de Rambouillet, prided themselves extremely on the refined elevation of their sentiments. Father Pelletier, however, agreed with the Principal of the

¹ Voiture.

² Lenet, *Mémoires*.

Academy that the Duke would be better without this amusement. They therefore told him, quite untruly, that the gentleman who was to have escorted him had been taken suddenly ill. To go unattended was out of the question, and the whole scheme had to be given up. This may seem a very trivial incident ; but the moral principles of Bourges were not likely to survive among such surroundings. It was idle to suppose that a prince of Enghien's age and disposition could be controlled and imposed upon like a child. Dissimulation, he soon found, was a game any number of people could play at ; he wrote submissive letters, promising absolute obedience—and went his own way whenever he could. ' We princes are all cheats ', was the cheerful statement of his contemporary, Duke Charles of Lorraine ; and the Great Condé was not trained to be an exception to the rule. All that the tutor gained, in the end, by his interference, was the undying dislike of Mademoiselle de Bourbon. Father Rapin of Port Royal, writing of her long afterwards, says : " Her aversion to these (Jesuit) Fathers was caused by the incivility of Father Pelletier, to whom the Prince of Condé, her father, had given the charge of the Duc d Enghien ", and who " had no consideration for the Princess of Condé, her mother, or for herself, when they wished to see the little Duke ".

While Enghien was busied in outwitting his teachers and guardians, his future was receiving consideration from the most powerful man in Europe. An influence, directly exercised over him for barely five years, yet second to none in lasting effect, laid hold upon his life on the day when he first found himself face to face with Richelieu. The supremacy of the Cardinal had reached its highest point during these years of Enghien's early youth. He ruled France and the Court with a rod of iron ; the King was submissive before him, and the Princes abject. Henri de Bourbon was among the most slavish of his followers ; so that when M. le Duc took up his abode in Paris, it was a matter of course that, immediately after being presented to the King, he should be sent to pay his respects at the Palais-Cardinal ; " which he did ",—so it was said—" rather more proudly than his father ".¹ The impressions of his childhood and the memory of his uncle's death, were still very distinct. Richelieu, a past master in

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

the study of men, observed this new young prince with some attention. What career or position was he likely to create for himself in the future? What use could be made of him as a political pawn? Moreover, the Cardinal was considering an arrangement, suggested some years earlier, for the marriage of the Duc d'Enghien to a near relation of his own: Claire-Clémence de Maillé-Brézé,¹ his sister's child. Henri de Bourbon had begun his overtures as far back as 1633, when the contracting parties were aged, respectively, twelve and four. He was urged on by the report that Mademoiselle de Brézé already had other suitors, and that the Duc de la Tremoille was asking her hand for his eldest son. "Your Highness should be paying court for the marriage of M. le Duc to the daughter of the Marechal de Brézé", wrote one of his confidential agents. Richelieu was flattered by the prospect of this almost Royal alliance; but he sanctioned no formal negotiations till he had taken the measure of his intended nephew-in-law. This done, he made no further objections; M. le Duc satisfied him. The Cardinal was too acute not to see that here was a young man of exceptional character; one who, at sixteen, was already a person to be reckoned with, and whom it would be well to attach to his own interests as soon as possible. For the moment, he contented himself with superintending the choice of the Duke's confessor; it was his custom to appoint confessors for all the principal persons at Court, and to dismiss any spiritual adviser of whom he disapproved. A few months later, the official demand was made by Henri, Prince of Condé, on behalf of his son, to the Maréchal-Duc de Brézé, for the honour of his daughter's hand. That Enghien, precocious though he was, would offer any serious resistance to their scheme, was an idea which probably never entered the head of either Prince or Cardinal. Nevertheless, it was reported that Richelieu, on his death-bed, declared that M. le Duc had given him more trouble than illness or conspirators; "qu'il avoit plus souffert par lui que par ses plaies ou par Cinq-Mars".²

¹ Daughter of Urbain de Maillé, Maréchal-Duc de Brézé, and his wife, Nicole du Plessis de Richelieu.

² Henri Coiffier, Marquis de Cinq-Mars; beheaded, as a conspirator against Richelieu, 1642.

CHAPTER II

THE INFLUENCE OF RICHELIEU

1638-1642

PIERRE LENET, secretary and confidential agent to the House of Condé, says of M. le Duc, that the first years after he left Bourges would have been the happiest of his life, but for the prospect of his marriage to Mademoiselle de Brézé. It is not quite clear at what point in the transaction Henri de Bourbon first thought fit to broach the matter to his son. What appears certain is that at no time did he show the smallest sign of consulting his views, or of being guided by his inclinations. Enghien, so all good evidence agrees, was violently opposed to the idea, from the moment it was suggested to him. He was barely seventeen; he did not wish to be married at all; still less to acquiesce in a scheme for identifying his family interests with those of Richelieu. The Prince, on the other hand, shows himself to have been bent on this profitable connection, at all costs. In his letters to the Cardinal are to be found the most unblushing assertions, not only of his own joy and gratitude, but of that of his son and his whole family; he writes of "my son, who has the same burning wish that I have, to be allied to you". Richelieu, secretly no less anxious for the said alliance, gives his consent with dignity, not forgetting to keep up a fiction of the supposed lovers' happiness and devotion; at the same time setting a lynx-like watch upon M. le Duc, of whose real feelings he was soon made perfectly aware.

When his course at the Académie Royale was over, in 1638, Enghien was sent from Paris to spend some time as Deputy-Governor for his father at Dijon; where Lenet, as a councillor in the Parliament of Burgundy, saw him often, and intimately. He reports that "the

repeated suggestions of his marriage to Mademoiselle de Brézé were causing the Duke mortal anxiety"; and that "the more he was urged, the more he set himself against the project". One day, when they were out hunting together, he sounded Lenet as to whether open revolt would be possible, and put forward a desperate design, namely, to take refuge from the persecution of his father and the Cardinal in some small fortified place, such as the neighbouring town of Dôle, and from there to appeal to the King. He drew no encouragement from his companion; a shrewd man of business, described by Madame de Sévigné as having wits enough for four. Yet Lenet himself allows that he would not have discouraged even this forlorn hope, if he had realised 'what just cause for sorrow' was to come of the marriage.

Enghien's position at this time was one of complete dependence on his father; apart from whom he had absolutely no means of subsistence. He was summarily ordered to pay his court to Mademoiselle de Brézé, and had practically no choice but to obey. His letters are patterns of formal affection and dutifulness, since there was nothing to be gained by committing himself to a refusal in writing; but he contrived, by other methods, to make his reluctance so obvious as to cause Richelieu serious uneasiness. The Cardinal's private letters show clearly enough that he felt the strictest supervision to be necessary. M. le Duc had been directed to correspond with his future bride during his absence at Dijon; and Richelieu writes to Madame Bouthillier, the lady in charge of Mademoiselle de Brézé, that he has intercepted one of these letters. "I had the curiosity to open it", he says, "that I might judge of the style. I now send it to you, to fulfil my promise to the bearer, and to satisfy his master, who would be sorry that it should only travel half-way. You will give it, if you please, to my niece".¹ The writer of the letter in question was by this time too experienced not to suspect that he was being watched; he said, no doubt, whatever he can have felt himself expected to say to a child of ten years old, whom he scarcely knew, even by sight. He utterly refused, however, to make any advances, or to show the slightest interest in the poor little bride-elect, except on com-

¹ *Correspondence de Richelieu*, 1638.

pulsion. At times, when his neglect became so apparent as to excite comment, Richelieu would complain to the Prince, who could always be relied on to call his son to order, and exact some further tributes of consideration. Enghien never failed, in answer, to represent that he was doing all that could possibly be required of him. Nothing could exceed the simplicity or the caution with which he expresses himself; clear-sighted from his earliest years, he was fast learning to play a part for himself. One of his letters, written in 1640, describes how "we visited M. le Cardinal, who did us much honour, and told me that he was satisfied with me, and that he thought you would be, too; he spoke to me a great deal of the siege,¹ and asked me questions, which I answered as well as I could. After that he asked me if you were coming here, and what I was going to do. I told him I thought that both you and I would always do as he wished. Then I asked him for news of Mademoiselle de Brézé; he told me that she was well, and that I did her honour by remembering her. After that I went away";²—leaving behind him, no doubt, a very clear impression of outward civility and inward dislike.

Strange as it may seem, Richelieu's ardour for the marriage was in no way lessened by this almost open antagonism. On the contrary, the more he realised the Duke's force of character, the more he resolved to secure him to himself. He made opportunities for cultivating his acquaintance, and spoke in high praise of his brilliant qualities, seeing in him a social as well as a political power of the future. His military renown can hardly at that time have been foreseen, even by Richelieu. As regards social gifts, M. le Duc was certainly not endowed with beauty like that of his sister; his thin face, fierce large eyes, and immense aquiline nose, were almost grotesque, in certain aspects. "The face of an eagle", was the unanimous verdict of his contemporaries. Moreover, he himself cared nothing for his looks; he was notoriously untidy, and submitted reluctantly to the elaborate Court fashions of his time; though it was acknowledged that he had 'la mine haute' and 'l'air d'un grand prince', and knew how to appear in them to great advantage. In figure he was very slight, but perfectly proportioned,

¹ The siege of Arras, June-August, 1640.

² A.C., 1640.

and conspicuously active and graceful; his skill in dancing, not less than in riding, and other exercises, was a theme of constant admiration. His mental powers were beyond dispute; friends and enemies alike testify to them. One of his officers,¹ in a strictly impartial portrait, declares that the Duke's clearness of mind, force of judgment, and ease in expressing himself, were unsurpassed. No one could be a more thoroughly entertaining companion than he, when it suited his purpose; and a lively sense of humour, coupled with an unsparing tongue, caused him to be feared in certain circles where he was by no means loved. Already he had found a congenial atmosphere in the society of the Hôtel de Rambouillet; and throughout his stay at Dijon he kept up a correspondence, in verse, with several members of that celebrated clique:

"Or, sachez, Monseigneur, que chacun vous renonce,
Si, ce paquet reçu vous ne faites réponse,
Et si vous n'exprimez avec de beaux vers
Des dames de Dijon les entretiens divers";

— the quotation is from a joint letter, signed 'Serveurs et Servantes', and dated.

"Écrivez trois mois avant Juillet,
Dedans l'hôtel de Rambouillet".

Popular, in a wider and more general sense, Enghien was not, and never would be; he lacked sympathy with the crowd, and had none of the ready good-nature which could act as a substitute. His power over others lay in certain vivid characteristics; in his energy, mental and physical; above all in the personal courage, touched with inspiration, which made his presence exhilarating, though it was not often genial. When he appeared for a time in Paris, in 1640, all the younger nobles at Court accepted le Duc as their leader; they followed him, admired him, and imitated him, till it seemed, naturally enough, to Richelieu as to others, that here indeed would be a valuable partisan. But the Duke had other qualities, less easy to reckon with. Nature and circumstances, between them, had launched

¹ Roger de Rabutin, Comte de Bussy-Rabutin, member of the Académie Française, well known as a writer of memoirs, and of the 'chroniques scandaleuses' of the time.

him on the world with few ideals, little or no belief in his fellow-creatures, and a very highly-strung nervous system, which his education had done nothing to improve. Throughout his life he was unaccountable and headstrong as an ally ; while as an instrument he was already almost beyond control, as Richelieu was perhaps the first to discover.

Henri de Bourbon lost no opportunity of atoning for his son's deficiencies as a suitor. He visited Mademoiselle de Brézé, who was a shy and rather backward little girl ; and told her, with many compliments, that she should be ' dame et maîtresse ' in his house. When all the preliminary negotiations had been concluded, he insisted on Enghien's paying her a visit of ceremony, and did his utmost to display him in the part of the devoted lover. On their arrival, the attendants would have brought forward a chair of state for M. le Duc, but the Prince waved it away ; " That is not the place for a servant ", he said ; " go and sit on a little stool beside your mistress ". To make Enghien ridiculous—Enghien who never failed to detect the smallest absurdity in those around him—was to put the final touch to the situation. He could not disobey ; his rage and humiliation were forced to concentrate themselves into a steady dislike of the unoffending bride, whose only wish and object was to obey her orders. Claire-Clémence de Maillé-Brézé had none of the attributes likely to appeal to a cultivated and ambitious young prince of eighteen ; one whose domestic qualities, if they existed at all, had certainly never been developed in any direction. She was small and childish, even for her age, and gave no striking promise of beauty or brilliancy for the future. Misfortune seems to have pursued her through life, in small things as in great. She was not without sterling gifts of character ; but nothing could redeem the fact of her insignificance, especially in a circle where self-assertion was the rule. Her many sorrows did not command much sympathy from the world she lived in. The privilege of marrying a Prince of the Blood was held to compensate for almost any degree of adversity ; she had at least, as was said in all good faith, " the honour of sharing the misfortunes of M. le Prince ".¹ At this early stage of her promotion she was innocently

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*, iii. 230.

pleased and flattered by her unexpected importance, and much impressed by her fiancé, in spite of his ungraciousness. Her obedience was a matter of course, since the Duc de Brézé readily gave his consent. The only dissentient voice among the relations, on either side, seems to have been that of Madame la Princesse. One of the Prince's confidential messengers, who had been dispatched to tell her of the final decision, reported that she was a good deal concerned over Mademoiselle de Brézé's very small stature. But she was too well trained to submission not to "desire nothing so much as the fulfilment of the Prince's wish", and only ventured to express a hope "that M. le Duc might find satisfaction in the marriage, since it was a matter that would affect his whole life".¹

The agreement as to the marriage, ratified by the King's consent, was no sooner made public than Richelieu emphasised it by taking his future nephew ostentatiously under his protection. He was entirely of Father Pelletier's opinion as to a mind that required occupation, and his first step was clearly to Enghien's advantage. He persuaded the Prince to send him on active service. The Thirty Years' War, just entering on its later stages, was a school of arms in which many of 'Benjamin's' pupils completed their education. Since France had been drawn into hostilities, in 1635, the Spanish forces on the northern and southern frontiers, and the Austrian Imperialist army towards the east, had provided an outlet for the superfluous energy of the kingdom almost as effectively as the early Crusades. Richelieu's attention, at this moment, was chiefly engaged by the Spaniards in the north. "I think", he writes, "that you will not wish this campaign, now opening, to pass without M. le Duc taking some part in it, and that you should allow him to see it, in the company of the oldest Marshal of France; who will know best how to teach him what a Prince of his rank ought to know". To make matters more urgent, he even told the King, in Enghien's presence, that M. le Duc was too old to be left idle, and that he ought to be with the army. There can be no doubt that the Duke asked nothing better. He was at once enrolled among the 'volontaires',—a volunteer corps of a strictly exclusive kind, in which most young men of good family made

¹ A.C., 1640.

their early campaigns, and placed under the charge of the Maréchal-Duc de la Meilleraye, a commander whose merits, as a cousin of the House of Richelieu, outweighed the fact that he was by no means the oldest Marshal of France. Serving in the same company were many of Enghien's closest friends ; Gesvres,¹ a young man of high character and exceptional promise ; Nemours, " a handsome prince, full of intelligence and courage ", but one whose influence was greatly mistrusted by M. le Duc's confessor ; and Gaspard de Coligny,² already renowned for his daring and his accomplishments. Among the senior officers, the Duke's chosen companion was that distinguished soldier and courtier, Antoine de Gramont, Comte de Guiche,³ who afterwards served him faithfully in the severe campaigns of Fribourg and Nördlingen, and whose disposition ' for wit and cheerful humour ' he found peculiarly acceptable. As for the moral principles of the Comte de Guiche, they were emphatically those of his time and condition. M. le Duc took no exception to them ; the society of the burghers of Dijon having only heightened his appreciation of the company in which he now found himself.

The principal achievement of the campaign of 1640, on the northern frontier, was the taking of Arras by the French, after a seven weeks' siege ; in the course of which, Enghien accomplished his first exploits or ' premières armes '. A young Gascon gentleman, the Comte de Chavagnac, who was present in the camp, tells of the Duke's arrival, on the staff of La Meilleraye, and of the honours done him ; how the ' maître de camp ' appointed him (Chavagnac) and three others to act as an informal body-guard to M. de Duc ; and what a lively occupation they found it. " It must be owned ", he says, " that the young prince taught us, from the first, to expect nothing short of master-strokes ". As the weeks passed, the besieging army suffered almost as much from want as the inhabitants within the walls. Their supplies were constantly cut off by an outer ring of the enemy's force ; till provisions became so scarce that, according to Chavagnac, the infantry officers used to sleep at night under the

¹ Louis-François-Potier, Marquis de Gesvres, killed at Thionville, 1643.

² Afterwards Duc de Châtillon ; born 1620 ; killed at Charenton, 1649.

³ Born 1604 ; Marshal of France, 1642 ; Duc de Gramont, 1644 ; died 1678.

General's table, to make sure of finding a place there in the morning. La Meilleraye kept the Duke, for the most part, in his own company. "M. le Maréchal oblige me on every possible occasion, and takes very particular care of me", is Enghien's account to the Prince ; but he was not anxious to be treated differently from his fellow-volunteers, and refused the guard of honour which the authorities would have placed before his lodging. The Marshal, on his side, was not less satisfied with his charge. Personal courage he would probably take more or less for granted, in a Bourbon ; but quickness, and capacity for hard work, he had not looked for. He was lost in astonishment before a Prince who surveyed fortifications for pleasure, and who would scarcely leave the trenches to eat or sleep. His reports prompted a gracious message from Richelieu to Madame la Princesse. "M. d'Enghien behaves in the army with all the intelligence, judgment, and courage that she could wish". The same letter describes further how, a few days before, an officer had been wounded, and his horse killed, so near the Duke that he was covered with blood ; and how nothing would induce him to leave M. de la Meilleraye at any dangerous post, however earnestly the Marshal himself might persuade him ; all of which information may have gratified the Princess as much as was intended, and certainly caused her agonies of anxiety. The message concludes with a complacent reference to Mademoiselle de Brézé. "You will also tell Madame la Princesse that war does not prevent his thinking of love ; he is constant to his mistress, and had sent a gentleman with a message to her ; whom I stopped here, though I sent the letter on". Enghien's own statement regarding this sentimental correspondence, in a letter to his father, is as follows : "I have also written to Mademoiselle de Brézé ; I had not intended that M. de la Roussière should go as far as Paris ; but M. de Maigrin told me that I should oblige M. le Cardinal extremely by sending him to Mademoiselle de Brézé ; which I have done, believing that you would think it best".¹ M. de Maigrin, whose name often appears in this connection, was a creature of the Cardinal's, whom he had attached to the Duke for the express purpose of observing him, and prompting the necessary civilities.

¹ A.C., 1640.

Throughout the siege it was the especial joy and pride of the 'volontaires' to be sent out to meet and protect the convoys of provisions. On these occasions there was always a chance that some sharp fighting would be met with. Enghien himself relates his first experience of the kind; when La Meilleraye, with 3000 horse, encountered the same number of the enemy, "whom he charged to so much purpose that we routed them utterly after being engaged with them for more than half an hour". "I am greatly obliged to M. d'Estaing", he continues, "for he never left me; and to Messieurs de Maigrin and Francine¹ also". "Messieurs de Nemours, Luynes, Gesvres, Grancey, and several other volunteers distinguished themselves". "We lost fifty men, besides some officers and volunteers".² Gesvres was noted in this encounter for leading a charge after he had been severely wounded. Witnesses were not wanting who said that M. le Duc deserved at least as much credit as some of the friends whose names he mentions. "He was as much distinguished by his courage as by his rank", was the opinion of those who could imagine no higher compliment. Of another skirmish, which occurred a few days later, the Duke again sends an account to his father; this time, however, not written with his own hand, "because"—he says in apology—"I am very tired, from having slept five nights on the ground, behind the lines, waiting for an attack, and from going to meet the convoy, and from wearing armour for five hours while the fight lasted; but I have dictated it to Duru just as I saw it".³ These hardships notwithstanding, it was evident that M. le Duc thoroughly enjoyed his surroundings. He was captivated, not only by the actual excitement of battle, but also by the science of war; here were indeed for him 'Des secrets inconnus, dont tu seras épris'. His letters are full of maps, and plans of fortifications, which he has drawn up. After the surrender of the town he writes that they have sung a Te Deum; and in the same breath, "I will send you the plan (of Arras) as soon as possible; but I want it to be very exact". Mademoiselle de Brézé was thankfully forgotten; except when M. de Maigrin insisted on bringing her to mind.

¹ Esquire to the Duc d'Enghien; died at Thionville, 1643.

² A.C., July 19, 1640.

³ A.C., 1640.

The capitulation of Arras had one great disadvantage in the eyes of M. le Duc. It put an end to campaigning so far as he was concerned, and left him face to face with the prospect of his approaching marriage. All arrangements were being made for the wedding to take place early in the following year. Enghien's feelings on the subject had been well known from the first; so much so, that the Prince's attitude seems to have caused some remark, even in that age of political marriages. Mademoiselle de Montpensier, his cousin, voices the general opinion when she writes of "M. le Duc, who only consented to the affair with great reluctance, and because he was afraid of displeasing his father. He (the Prince) had always kept him at Dijon, giving him nothing, and allowing him no liberty".¹ It had been decreed that Enghien should not make any stay in Paris till the last moment before the ceremony; Richelieu did not feel assured enough of his submission to leave him at the Hôtel de Condé, exposed to an atmosphere of culture, romance, and intrigue. But it was not long before the Duke was finally convinced that, for the moment, nothing was left to him but acquiescence. He knew that he had, as yet, no friends of his own powerful enough to offer him support in resistance; even in his household he was surrounded by spies, creatures of his father and of the Cardinal. His personal ambition, and the worldly wisdom of Lenet, worked together till he resigned himself to his fate. Lenet pointed out forcibly that rebellion at this juncture would ruin his hopes of advancement for ever; that Richelieu could effectively prevent his being given any chance of distinguishing himself in the future. Another Bourbon Prince, the Comte de Soissons, had never prospered since he refused an alliance designed for him in the same quarter. Enghien's objections to the marriage had not been primarily on sentimental grounds; and he was unwilling to sacrifice his career,—that career of which Arras had given him an enchanting foretaste,—merely for the sake of an aversion to Richelieu and his designs. Nevertheless, as the days went on he became so visibly depressed that a warning was brought to the Cardinal, who immediately sent one of his most intimate agents, the Comte de Chavigny, to make

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

observations. Enghien gives his own version of the interview: "I think I ought to tell you", he writes to the Prince, "that M. de Chavigny came to see me yesterday, and sent word that he had something important to say to me; which was that a gentleman had told him of a rumour that I was opposed to this marriage, and had no liking for Mademoiselle de Brézé; and that it was observed I wore a melancholy face".¹ Pride and expediency alike forbade the Duke from admitting as much, now that his mind was made up. "I told him I had never been more cheerful".

The delight of the Prince and the Cardinal in their joint scheme found vent in magnificent preparations for the wedding. One slight and characteristic difficulty occurred when it was discovered that Richelieu, on giving his niece her dowry, had cut her out of his will; but the Prince, while appearing to yield to this arrangement, secretly prepared a protesting document, which he intended to be brought forward at the Cardinal's death. Thus, as a French historian has pointed out, "each party was convinced that he had deceived the other", and the harmony was complete.² The festivities, designed by Richelieu, opened on January 14th, 1641, when the 'fiançailles' or betrothal ceremony took place in the King's apartments, as was the custom for Princes of the Blood. On the same day, at the Palais-Cardinal, before the King and Queen and their whole Court, a dramatic representation was given, followed by a ball. The play was *Mirame*, written, in part, by no less a person than Richelieu himself; and the great statesman is reported to have been so well satisfied with his own work as to lead the applause. At the fall of the curtain the stage was cleared, and transformed into a ball-room; while, by some triumph of ingenuity, a gilded bridge unrolled itself, leading to the box in which the Queen sat, that she might walk down it, to open the ball. M. le Duc, the central figure of the day, was her partner; he bore himself as cheerfully as anyone present, but it was noticed that he looked very white. As for the twelve-year-old bride, her usual ill-luck did not desert her. She had been dressed for the occasion in all the splendour possible, with many jewels, a long

¹ A.C., 1640.

² Homberg et Jouselin, *La Femme du Grande Condé*.

gown, and a pair of abnormally high heels, which it was hoped would give her dignity. The natural result was that, in dancing a 'courante', she tripped and fell headlong, while the whole company laughed,—not excepting the bridegroom, who was little disposed to consider her feelings, and felt himself still further aggrieved by her awkwardness. None of the guests were inclined to make much allowance for a child, her uncle's niece, who had been brought straight from the country to make a marriage which a Princess would not have despised. The Prince, her father-in-law, alone felt bound to take up a more encouraging line; he went from one to another extolling her, and exclaiming dutifully, 'Est-elle assez jolie!' Another entertainment, not less impressive, was given to celebrate the signing of the marriage contract, on February 9th. Here a most elaborate allegorical ballet was arranged, having for its subject 'La Prospérité des Armes de la France'. All the youth of the Court took part in this performance, which was also adorned by "the finest mechanical contrivances that had ever been seen in France".¹ M. le Duc appeared in two of the figures. In the first he represented Jupiter descending from the heavens, by means of one of these marvellous 'machines'. In the second, he took the part of a demon. This latter rôle was particularly successful; he played it "with an air, an enjoyment, and a grace, which gave him the advantage over all the others". The Cardinal's gratification knew no bounds. "His Eminence was never seen in better humour",—so Henri Arnauld, Bishop of Angers, writes to his friend Barillon; "he made everyone dance, even Madame d'Elbeuf the Dowager, the good lady of Ventadour, and Madame la Chancelière".² Of Henri de Bourbon, Arnauld adds, "Monseigneur le Prince fit merveille".

Among such rejoicings the marriage contract was signed of the "Trèshault et puissant Prince, Monseigneur Louis de Bourbon, Duc d'Anguien, Pair de France", and "Mademoiselle Claire Clémence de Maillé de Brézé, fille d'Urbain de Maillé de Brézé, Maréchal de France". The document gives an imposing list of those "present in their persons"; headed by the "trèshault très-puissant et très excellent Prince, Louis, par la grace de Dieu, Roy de France et de Navarre"; who,

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

² * MS., Bibliothèque Nationale, Paris.

" better to make known his pleasure in the said marriage, and the honour of the said Seigneur Duc d'Anguien in being of his own Blood and lineage", gives to the bridegroom a sum of 150,000 'livres'. The "très-illustre et Eminentissime Monseigneur Jean-Armand, Cardinal-Duc de Richelieu et de Fronsac", gives to "the said lady, his niece", 300,000 'livres', and several estates; the money, it is carefully stipulated, may be employed for paying off ancient debts in the Houses of Condé and Montmorency. The Prince and Princess of Condé give their son 80,000 'livres,' and the yearly revenue of certain lands; besides solemnly declaring him the heir of their remaining possessions. Other witnesses whose names find a place in the contract, were the "Trèshault et puissant Prince, Gaston, fils de France, Duc d'Orléans, de Chartres, et de Valois", the King's brother, and the 'Monsieur'¹ of the Fronde; and with him, a deeply-interested spectator, the 'excellent Princess' his daughter, Anne-Marie-Louise de Bourbon, heiress of Montpensier. 'La Grande Mademoiselle' was then a lively, high-spirited child of thirteen, who, as some thought, might with advantage have taken the place of the bride. She would certainly not have suffered from any lack of self-confidence. Two days later the same Royal guests attended the blessing of the marriage in the private Chapel of the Palais-Cardinal. Compared with the signing of the contract this ceremony was passed over very quietly; scarcely anything is recorded of it, beyond the fact of its having taken place. Viewing the circumstances, it was perhaps appropriate that the religious element should not be made too prominent.

This was M. le Duc's last appearance in public for many weeks. It appeared that he had caught cold during one of the rehearsals for the ballet; and the result, joined, as it was freely said, to the vexation caused him by his marriage, was an illness so serious as to endanger his life. For a time it seemed as though he might never be the subject of any further political

¹ Saint-Simon (ed. Chéruel, vii. 160-170) makes an exhaustive digression on the Court titles of 'Monsieur' (brother of the King), 'Madame' (wife of Monsieur), 'Mademoiselle' (eldest unmarried daughter of Monsieur), and others of the same kind, which came into use during the seventeenth century. He attributes them to no historic origin, and affirms that, "distinguished though they seem, they have neither foundation nor advantages, and arose only by chance".

designs. Richelieu, who had been building on their relationship, and to whom the Duke's death, at that moment, would have been a heavy blow, showed great anxiety about him. Arnould writes that "His Eminence arrived (in Paris) this evening, and went instantly to see Monseigneur d'Enghien, who is very ill; the doctors do not despair of him".¹ Such haste was evidently looked on as a mark of almost awe-inspiring consideration. Enghien, however, was in too prostrate a condition to be much impressed, even by a visit from the Cardinal in person. His illness seems to have been not unlike a severe form of the modern influenza, and was complicated by such acute depression of spirits that his doctors,—who belonged to an age when nervous cases were not recognised,—began to fear that his brain was permanently injured. A month from the date of Arnould's letter, Bourdelot, one of these doctors, writes to the Prince that "M. le Duc can now go into another room for two or three hours every afternoon".² A few days later, he is able "to go and watch the horses in the riding school"; and writes himself protesting that he is perfectly well, but for 'une foiblesse aux jambes'. At the same time the medical report complains that he would still speak to no one, and steadily resisted all attempts to amuse him. Above all, he was made miserable by the news that a fresh campaign was opening on the frontier, and "by listening to the preparations for war, when he himself had no hope of taking part in it".³ His only distraction was to hear the ponderous romances and histories of the time read aloud, from morning till night. A list of the volumes supplied to M. le Duc during his illness and convalescence, gives some idea of the hours that must have been thus occupied; it includes *Romant de l'Ariane* (in twelve books), *Romant d'Albanie*, *Romant de l'Indamire*, *Romant de Mélusine*; besides eight books of *Histoire Africaine*, *Stratonice*, and Bacon's *History of Henry VII.* Bourdelot states further that he cannot say whether the continual reading really occupied his patient's mind, or whether he only made it serve as an excuse for not speaking.

Towards the end of April, Enghien's energetic

¹ * MS., Bibliothèque Nationale.

² A.C., Bourdelot to Henri, Prince of Condé, 1641.

³ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

temperament at last asserted itself, and he grew suddenly better ; his friends were made welcome again ; he " talked and laughed with as good a grace as before he fell ill ", and showed that " his powers of reasoning were stronger than ever ".¹ Questioned by his doctors, he admitted that only the first ten days of his illness were quite distinct in his mind. Of the days that followed, he assured them that he had nothing but a confused memory ; and although, for the greater part of the time he had had no fever, yet he could not so much as recall some of the delusions from which he was told he had suffered. Bourdelot records all these impressions in a letter to the Prince ; showing that, however unimpaired the Duke's intellect might be, his nervous organisation was at no time one to be trifled with.

On Ascension Day (May, 1641) M. le Duc was sufficiently recovered to assist at the full length of the ceremonies in Notre-Dame ; where he was seen by the whole congregation, " while everyone blessed God for his health ". The yearly campaign on the northern frontier was not too far advanced for him to join La Meilleraye at the siege of Aire ; and the Cardinal, as a sign of goodwill and joy at his recovery, presented him with two horses and a suit of armour before he set out. But, as it proved, the Duke's second campaign offered small chance of distinction to anyone engaged in it ; and in a few weeks it became evident that his health was still unequal to much strain. Soon after the capitulation of the town, Richelieu writes to the Prince that " the fear lest M. d'Anguien might fall ill obliged me to ask him to go and drink the waters of Forges ". The Cardinal undertakes entire direction of his nephew's movements, and orders him from Forges to Paris and finally to join his wife at Merlou, a country estate of the Montmorency family. Here they were detained for some time, as the little Duchess fell ill of small-pox. M. le Duc writes to his father, announcing that " la petite vérole est venue à ma fame " ; but that the attack is very slight, and the doctor assures them that Madame la Duchesse will not be marked. Merlou, and his wife's society, did not offer an enlivening prospect to the Duke. Later in the autumn he urges a request for fresh instructions, adding suggestively

¹ A.C., Montreuil to Henri, Prince of Condé, April 23, 1641. Montreuil was the second doctor in attendance on the Duke.

that the Duchess has been quite recovered for more than a month; and "now that the weather is cold the country begins to be very disagreeable for ladies".¹

Henri de Bourbon did not regret an excuse for keeping his son away from the society and influence of the Court. He feared nothing so much as that Enghien, once given the opportunity, might use his undoubted gifts to create an independent position for himself. "Believe me, a life in Paris, in the absence of M. le Cardinal and myself, is most harmful to him", he writes to Richelieu's secretary; and he was warmly seconded, on moral grounds, by the Duke's confessor, Father Mugnier, who pronounced uncompromisingly, "*Le séjour à Paris, et à l'hostel de Condé, ne vaut rien du tout à Monseigneur le Duc*". Enghien, to judge by his letters, was still all submission in words; but it did not take him long to discover that he might now be able to raise a few difficulties for his uncle-in-law. The correspondence between Richelieu and the Prince begins to show some slight misgivings as to how far their authority might extend. Already the Cardinal had found the system of spies failing him. Maigrin, his chief agent in the Duke's household, was not only a man of low character but an unskilful tactician. He had not the intelligence necessary for deceiving M. le Duc; who, having once found him out, made a practice of misleading him by fictitious confidences. Strife was inevitable, in such an establishment, between Enghien's own retainers and the hired informers who were thrust in amongst them; and a climax was reached when Maigrin fell in a duel by the hand of one Damours, a former servant of the Prince, and now the Duke's 'maître-d'hôtel'. No one accused Enghien of connivance; but, while expressing polite concern over the incident, he took no measures for delivering up Damours to justice. Richelieu wrote indignant letters, complaining of the "great disorder, and want of dignity, in the household of M. le Duc". He was, however, sufficiently warned by experience to appoint a new gentleman-in-waiting of a wholly different stamp, as successor to Maigrin. César de Cotentin, Comte de Tourville, seems to have been one of the very few upright men chosen to associate with Enghien in his youth; he won the Duke's confidence, and tried

¹ A.C., November, 1641.

honestly to keep him from offending the Cardinal past all forgiveness.

Possibly Richelieu might have taken the fate of Maigrin less to heart if he had had reason to be satisfied with his nephew on other grounds. But a more serious and deeply-seated grievance than any dispute concerning the household, was M. le Duc's persistent and open neglect of his wife. On this point the Cardinal found himself, for a time, quite powerless. Enghien had so far prevailed with his relations that the Hôtel de Rocheguyon was now granted to him for a residence in Paris. The Prince, unwillingly persuaded into this further expense, had fitted his son's house with "the meanest possible decorations"; which Richelieu supplemented by lending furniture of his own. Here the Duke and Duchess were no sooner established, in a style 'plus propre que magnifique', than Enghien began to take the place for which he was well qualified, at Court and in society. As a sign of growing independence, he now attended the more important debates in Parliament; he sent messages of condolence or congratulation on his own account to other princes whenever etiquette demanded it; also he made a point of receiving men of letters, 'very agreeably', in his own house.¹ The Duchess, on the other hand, was scarcely seen in public at all; her husband ignored her, and his family, for the most part, followed his example. Henri de Bourbon, who might otherwise have protected her interests, was conducting a campaign in Roussillon; and it was evident that the Duke would take commands from no one else.

Madame la Princesse, in spite of her husband's example, showed no inclination to take up the cause of her daughter-in-law; being, indeed, not a little bored by her company, and inclined to sympathise with her son. Her own circle, where she delighted to welcome him, included all the most celebrated figures from the 'salons' of the time; men and women whose accomplishments and adventures have filled volumes. Not the least conspicuous of her intimate friends was Marie de Gonzagne, Duchesse de Nevers, afterwards Queen of Poland, the heroine of Cinq-Mars' romance. Foremost among the orthodox 'précieuses' who adorned the Princess's coterie were Madame de Ram-

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

bouillet¹ and her daughter Julie;² of the latter, Talle-
mant des Réaux asserts that "no woman's beauty
had been so much praised by poets since the days of
Helen of Troy". Next to these, Madame de Sablé³
was perhaps, more than any other, the presiding genius.
She was the promoter of all the most exalted ideas of
love, chivalry, and friendship, in the high-flown style
known as the 'genre Espagnole'; and as, in the words
of one who knew her, "she was able to give weight to
her sentiments by her intelligence, as well as by her
beauty, she gained great authority".⁴ It must be
owned that this authority did not reach beyond matters
of conversation; her theories were more discussed
than practised, by the majority of her listeners. Cor-
neille was the great writer of this coterie; Voiture,
Benserade, and Sarrazin, the minor poets. Mademoiselle
de Scudéry has drawn most of its members in her once
famous romance of *Le Grand Cyrus*. The original of
the Great Cyrus himself is none other than the Great
Condé, as he appeared in early life; and his companions-
in-arms at Rocroy, Fribourg, and Nördlingen, may be
recognised under such disabling titles as 'Tigrane',
'Artabase', 'Aduisus', and 'Artibie'. There, too, were
the beauties of a younger generation than Madame de
Sablé; Mademoiselle de Bourbon and her friends;
her two cousins, Marie-Louise and Isabelle de Mont-
morency-Boutteville,⁵ and the sisters Anne and Marthe
Poussart de Fors du Vigean. Isabelle de Montmorency
and Marthe du Vigean rivalled, or it was even said
surpassed, Anne de Bourbon in loveliness and charm.
Madame la Duchesse was not likely to shine in their
society; she who—so Mademoiselle de Montpensier
asserts—"was so childish that, two years after her
marriage, she still played with dolls and was despised
and ill-treated by the whole family of Monsieur son
mari". The young men, surnamed, collectively, 'les
damoiseaux', who were privileged to flirt, and play
intellectual games, within this exclusive circle, were

¹ Catherine de Vivonne, daughter of the Marquis de Pisani; married Charles d'Angennes, Marquis de Rambouillet.

² Julie d'Angennes; born 1607; married 1645, Charles de Sainte-Maure, Duc de Montausier.

³ Madeleine de Souvré; born 1602; married Philippe de Laval-Montmorency, Marquis de Sablé.

⁴ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

⁵ Daughters of François de Montmorency, Comte de Boutteville, the famous swordsman who was beheaded for duelling, 1627.

not unworthy of the honour. Two of their number,—Enghien himself, and the young cousin who was afterwards known as the Duc de Luxembourg,¹ 'le tapissier de Notre-Dame',—lived to take rank among the greatest soldiers of their time. Beside them were many who are extolled by their contemporaries for their courage, no less than for their good looks, but whose promise of youth was not to be fulfilled; Coligny, Laval,² Pisani,³ Chabot,⁴ La Moussaye,⁵ and others "who died in their glory, and never were old". Of the two brothers Coligny, Maurice,⁶ the elder, was the devoted admirer of Mademoiselle de Bourbon; Gaspard, of Isabelle de Montmorency. Enghien himself, in spite of a reputation for heartlessness, had developed a romantic passion for Marthe du Vigean, a girl of eighteen, surpassingly beautiful, and who, almost alone among Madame de Sablé's disciples, had actually made the principles of the 'genre Espagnole' a rule of life. Richelieu, hearing of this most definite peril, immediately decided that Enghien must stay in Paris no longer. For the moment it was useless to expect any consideration from him towards Madame la Duchesse. The Hôtel de Rocheguyon was closed. The Duchess was sent to school, to the Carmelites of St. Denis; and the Duke to pass some months under the personal supervision of the Cardinal at Narbonne and at Bourbon, where it was not long before a fresh cause of disturbance arose.

This last, and most obstinate, encounter between the prince of twenty and the statesman of fifty-eight, was brought about by a matter, apparently trivial, but capable, at that date, of arousing the strongest feelings of all concerned. The point at issue was whether a Cardinal,—a Prince of the Church,—was justified, as such, in taking precedence of a Prince of the Blood. Richelieu's own position was independent; by virtue

¹ François de Montmorency-Boutteville, son of the Comte de Boutteville. The nickname of "le tapissier de Nôtre Dame" was bestowed upon him from the number of trophies won by him in the later wars of Louis XIV, and hung in the Cathedral.

² Guy de Montmorency-Laval-Bois-Dauphin, Marquis de Laval; eldest son of Madame de Sablé; born 1622; killed at Dunkirk, 1646.

³ Léon d'Angennes, Marquis de Pisani, only son of Madame de Rambouillet; born 1615; killed at Nördlingen, 1644.

⁴ Guy-Aldonce, Chevalier de Chabot; killed at Dunkirk, 1646.

⁵ François de Goyon de la Moussaye, aide-de-camp to the Duc d'Enghien at Rocroy; died at Stenay, 1650.

⁶ Maurice de Coligny, killed in a duel by the Duc de Guise, 1644.

of his secular office he took a place above the Princes ; and Enghien, who owed him the additional deference of a nephew, had never made the slightest objection to yielding it. But when it appeared that an order had been issued, by which he was required to give way to the ' Eminences ', all and sundry, who congregated under Richelieu's roof at Narbonne, he refused to submit. It was here that his future enemy, Mazarin, then the newest of Cardinals, first crossed his path. " Cardinal Mazarin has obtained an order from the King to pass before Princes of the Blood ", so Enghien writes. " I spoke to M. le Cardinal (Richelieu) about it, but he did not give me a very favourable reply ".¹ Richelieu threw all the weight of his influence into the scale in support of the new order ; but M. le Duc was firm. To all remonstrances he answered, in terms of polite defiance, " I will do all that M. le Cardinal tells me to do ; I have no other fervent wish than to obey him in everything ; but I do not believe that he would lay this command on me, against my honour ". To his father he wrote, less elaborately,—“ I will not give place to him (Mazarin) for any orders I have from them, until I have yours ”.²

At this crisis even Henri de Bourbon wavered in his allegiance to the Cardinal. The thought that a question which might affect his own rank was at stake, actually forced him into some show of resistance. He succeeded, at length, in arranging a compromise ; but, unfortunately, without consulting M. le Duc as to the conditions. Mazarin, at least, was vanquished ; Richelieu undertook that the claim should be waived, and the new order suppressed. In return he demanded that Enghien should recognise his duty as a nephew, by yielding precedence not only to himself, but also to his brother, Cardinal Alphonse du Plessis de Richelieu, known as the Cardinal of Lyons ; a man who, apart from his sacred office, had no claim to distinction whatever. As a punishment, this condition was most ingeniously contrived, and quite worthy of its originator. To make certain of its prompt fulfilment, Richelieu pointed out that the Duke, who had been allowed to take part for a few weeks in a somewhat uneventful campaign in Roussillon, would pass by the residence

¹ *A.C.*, 1641 ; the Duc d'Enghien to Henri, Prince of Condé.

² *Ibid.*

of Cardinal Alphonse on his return ; and would thus have an opportunity of paying him his respects. Word was sent to the Cardinal of Lyons ; who, in his elation at the prospect of being visited by M. le Duc, and taking precedence of him in the eyes of all the world, re-furnished his state apartments and prepared a splendid reception. Enghien, when he found what had been undertaken for him, was so thoroughly enraged that he resolved on a deliberate affront. He passed through Lyons, as it had been arranged ; but, to the mingled dismay and amusement of his suite, he absolutely declined to meet Cardinal Alphonse or to set foot inside his house. On this point he was so determined that none of those present dared to argue with him. He lodged with the Archbishop, a member of the Villeroy family, who entertained him very much to his satisfaction ; and an hour or two before his departure, the Duke's compliments were sent to his Eminence of Lyons through a gentleman-in-waiting, who, it was reported, delivered the message without much show of reverence. There could be no mistaking the studied nature of the insult ; and Richelieu, as soon as it came to his ears, was proportionately furious. In vain his attendants tried to calm him by urging excuses for Enghien's conduct, such as his youth, and the possibility of his having been led away by his companions. Richelieu answered, truly enough, that " when youth was as enlightened (*aussi éclairée*) as in the case of M. le Duc, whatever harm he did was done by malice and design " ; and that as for his companions, none of them had enough power over him to persuade him into such a step against his will. It was not long before he decided on an appropriate revenge. He realised that he could not control the Duke by direct influence ; but he could still control the Prince, his father, whose parental rights had never been disputed. Enghien had made it a principle to recognise no authority but that of a Bourbon greater than himself ; either that of the King or of the head of his own House. Richelieu therefore addressed a letter to Henri de Bourbon—whom he knew to be innocent on this occasion—accusing him of having instigated M. le Duc's offence. " I have great reason to complain of you, since you instructed your son to insult me in my own family, and in my present state ",

he says, referring to the illness from which he never recovered ; " I hope that God will restore me to such health as will allow me to protect myself against your good-will ". He made it clear that no forgiveness was to be looked for until Enghien had publicly humiliated himself by travelling back to Lyons, and there visiting Cardinal Alphonse, and allowing him to display his right of precedence.

Lenet gives a detailed account of the agitation that followed ; how Richelieu, while meditating this vengeance, let the Duke suppose that he was pacified ; how he (Lenet) and Tourville felt convinced that this was not the end of the matter, and did their utmost to induce Enghien to make some amends of his own accord, telling him plainly, " Monseigneur, on vous trompe ". They suggested, among other expedients, that he might go to hunt a stag at Rimi, in Bresse ; and once there, as they said, he could easily " go some fine morning to visit the Cardinal of Lyons, and swallow the pill with a good grace ". Enghien, though under no illusions as to Richelieu's pretended friendship, maintained that he had no intention of going to Lyons at all ; but that if he were to choose, he would rather be driven to it by force than appear to do it of his own free will. Driven to it by force he was, in the end, though not without a last struggle. The Prince, terrified by open signs of displeasure, came himself to Bourbon to fetch his son ; he conducted him personally as far as Chalons, and saw him embarked, ' in the worst possible weather,' on the river Saône, *en route* for Provence, where the Cardinal of Lyons had now withdrawn himself. " Those who knew the Duke, and his high spirit ", says Lenet, " will have no difficulty in believing that all the authority, all the prayers, and all the threats of the Prince, were necessary to persuade him ". He sought out Cardinal Alphonse and gave him the coveted precedence ; dined with him, ' very sorrowfully ', and returned to join his father at Dijon.

Henri de Bourbon may well have felt that his parental authority would not often be equal to so severe a strain. He was said to have regretted the humiliation he had forced upon his son when, on the very night of Enghien's return, the news was brought to them that Richelieu's life was despaired of. Yet he was still so far in the dying minister's power as to

carry out one more of his wishes. Enghien was sent back to Paris, and there was so far wrought on, by his father's orders, as to arrive at a temporary reconciliation with his wife. Close on two years had passed since their marriage, and Madame la Duchesse could no longer be treated as a child. She had benefited, both in mind and person, by her education at St. Denis; and the Duke, though by no means an affectionate husband, ceased, for a time, to behave towards her with studied neglect.

Richelieu lingered for some weeks, and died on December 4th, 1642. His death gave unquestioned relief to Henri de Bourbon, and to many others who had lived under his yoke for the last twenty years. Even Louis XIII, who was already far advanced in his last illness, and had only a few months to live, declared that now at last he felt himself a King. His subjects, from the Queen downwards, showed frankly that they too felt themselves delivered from an oppressor. The people of Paris gave vent to their satisfaction in ballads and songs, describing the Cardinal's triumphant reception in the infernal regions :

"A la moitié du chemin,
Caron lui donna la main :
'Passez, le plus grand monarque,
Qui fût jamais dans ma barque'.

Arrivé dedans ce lieu,
Croyant être à Richelieu,
Les diabolins, tous en garde,
Mirent bas leurs hallebardes".¹

'Il est passé', they sang joyfully. But his influence remained; not less over Enghien's future than over the destinies of France. He had done much, in a short space, to ruin the Duke's character in private life; the enforced marriage, together with the example of perpetual spying, self-seeking, and deceit, could not but have the most disastrous results, from a moral point of view. On the other hand, there can be little doubt that it was Richelieu who prepared a way for the truly magnificent opening of Enghien's public career. Almost with his last breath he advised the King to appoint M. le Duc as Commander-in-Chief of the army on the northern frontier; an instruction which was punctually fulfilled, although the decision was not made known until after the Cardinal's death.

¹ * "Receuil de Chansons", MS., A.C.

CHAPTER III

ROCROY

1643

ENGHIEN'S appointment to command the 'army of the North' was proclaimed by Louis XIII in February, 1643. The announcement, it must be owned, was received at first with doubtful approval. The new General was twenty-one years old; he had served as a volunteer in three campaigns, not one of which was of first-rate importance. In the last of these, at the siege of Perpignan, he had been the leader of a corps of 'gentilshommes volontaires'; but this was, literally, the only responsible military post which had, so far, fallen to his share. He had never seen a pitched battle; all his practical experience of warfare had been gained in skirmishing and in besieging frontier towns. Such sudden promotion was hardly usual, even at that date, except in the case of a Royal Prince; and Enghien, Bourbon though he was, could not claim the privileges of the reigning House. The drawbacks of the situation were so obvious, that not even the King's sanction could remove them altogether; it was urged by more than one member of the Council that the Duke was too young, and also that his advancement would throw more power than could be tolerated into the hands of the Prince, his father. Mazarin, who had succeeded Richelieu in the Ministry, made a point of supporting the King's choice; he was anxious to conciliate the House of Condé, and it was partly owing to his representations that the original scheme held good. He agreed, however, as a concession to prudence, that a cautious veteran, the Marshal de l'Hôpital,¹ should be nominated as Enghien's Lieutenant-General; with a stipulation that "M. le Duc was to be guided by him

¹ François de l'Hôpital, Sieur du Hallier; born 1583; died 1660.

in all matters". L'Hôpital's batôn had been a reward for the length rather than the brilliancy of his services; he was deliberate in his methods, and possessed of no great force of character. If Mazarin seriously expected him to exercise a controlling power over the Duke, it can only be supposed that he knew little of either of them.

Next to L'Hôpital in rank among Enghien's officers, and far more likely to inspire him with confidence, was the 'Maître de camp général', Jean de Gassion, Huguenot and Gascon; now in his thirty-fourth year, and with eighteen years of military experience behind him. A true soldier of fortune, he had served Gustavus Adolphus and Duke Bernard of Weimar, not less than his own sovereign; and was renowned as the greatest plunderer, or 'dégâtier', in the whole French army. Gassion was not often seen at Court; he had scarcely an idea apart from his profession. It was told of him that Louis XIII had one day commanded him to be present at High Mass in the Royal Chapel; and had asked him afterwards what he thought of the music. "Sire", answered Gassion in all good faith, "six drummers and six trumpeters would have made far more noise". But if he failed in polite accomplishments, in his own sphere he was invaluable; his promptness, audacity, and resource had been proved at every point of an adventurous career. He was already known to Enghien; their first meeting had been at Arras.

Gassion's rank in the army was that of 'maréchal de camp'; but his present post of 'maître de camp général' was allowed to carry with it a certain degree of supremacy over any other such 'marshals' with whom he might serve. This office of 'maréchal de camp' ranked immediately below that of a Lieutenant-General; but a modern authority, the Duc d'Aumale, has explained the vagueness with which the term was sometimes applied. "These General officers", he says, "had no fixed duties, and not even a clearly-defined grade. They were given such temporary employment as the command of a detachment or of some point of attack during a siege, or of a certain number of troops in action". They had also the right to a voice in the council of war. Their title must not be confused with that of a 'Marshal of France', which exalted station

was occupied in the 'army of the North' by L'Hôpital alone. Claude de Létouf, Baron de Sirot,¹ and Henri de Senneterre, Marquis de la Ferté,² were, after Gassion, the most conspicuous of Enghien's 'marshals'. Sirot was a Burgundian gentleman of no great family pretensions; valiant and dependable, with an excellent opinion of himself, as his memoirs testify. He also had served foreign states, and had fought under Wallenstein, and Maurice of Nassau. La Ferté, though described by a seventeenth-century writer as 'full of courage and industry', and by no means inexperienced, was a man of a very different stamp. Brought up at Court, and not forced into the military profession to earn a living with his sword, he looked on these soldiers of fortune with envy and suspicion; his feeling towards Gassion in particular was one of the conflicting forces with which a commanding officer was obliged to reckon. The 'maréchal de bataille', whose chief function was 'to draw up the army in order of battle, under the General's directions', was Laurent de la Baume-Leblanc, Sieur de la Vallière, the father of the Duchess Louise. In command of the infantry were the Comte d'Espanan,³ charitably spoken of, hitherto, as 'malheureux à la guerre'; and the Marquis de Persan, nephew of L'Hôpital, but a devoted follower of Enghien. As for M. le Duc's own contemporaries and personal friends, they were well represented, though in less important posts. To one of them, his aide-de-camp La Moussaye, we owe the most vivid, and probably the most reliable, of the many accounts of the campaign.

Enghien left Paris in April and journeyed to Amiens. Here he was to collect his troops, and observe the enemy while awaiting the King's final instructions. Tourville, Francine, Montreuil, and several other members

¹ Sirot at this time held local rank only as 'maréchal de camp.'

² Afterwards Maréchal-Duc de la Ferté; born 1600; died 1681.

³ Roger de Bussolts, Comte d'Espanan:

"Le fidèle Espanan,
Qui tranchait de l'Achille,
Au premier patapan,
Prit son sac et ses quilles;
Mais las!
Quand il fallut combattre tout s'en alla!"
("La Chanson de Fontarabie", 1638.)

It is only fair to add that Espanan was lacking in judgment rather than in courage.

of his private suite, went with him. Among them was Father Mugnier, now no longer a tutor ; such an inference would clearly have been inconsistent with the dignity of a Commander-in-Chief ; but the chaplain of M. le Duc and the confidential correspondent of Henri de Bourbon. " We are rather idle here ", Enghien writes to his father on April 21st,¹ " and there is still no news of the enemy's plans ". It must be remembered that Amiens was at that time almost a frontier town, since the whole province of Artois, except the coast and a few isolated garrisons, was a Spanish possession. At the moment when M. le Duc assumed his command, forces were mustering on either side of the dividing line for a decisive attack. Don Francisco Melo de Braganza, Governor of the Spanish Netherlands, was not only proving himself a capable soldier, but had also gained some credit as a politician. He knew well the present weakness of the Government in France : a dying King, an infant successor, and an unpopular Regency. Nothing could be more favourable to the prospects of an invader. His object was to direct the attention of the French General as far as possible towards the western towns. His own route lay eastward, along the frontier as far as the river Meuse ; there he was to turn abruptly southwards before Enghien could come up with him, and make a determined advance upon Paris itself. If the first part of this manœuvre should succeed, the only obstacle in his path would be the fortified town of Rocroy ; which he hoped might be reduced by a few days' siege.

M. le Duc and his staff at Amiens watched daily and hourly for tidings. The King's orders, when they arrived, were found to be simple and all-embracing. Enghien was ' to discover the designs of the enemy, and to counteract them '. His Majesty, it was added, could give him no more detailed instructions. He was ' to do what seemed best to him on all occasions ' ; always remembering to be guided by the advice of the Marshal de L'Hôpital, and to embark on no enterprise which was not reasonably likely to be successful ; or, as it was expressed, ' glorieuse aux armes de Sa Majesté '. Already every possible measure was being taken to follow the Spanish General's movements. Gassion had been sent to reconnoitre, as far north as Doullens. The

¹ A.C.

Marshal de Guiche, then Governor of Arras, was another source of information. He writes to the Duke, towards the end of April, that the enemy have their orders to be ready to march at short notice : " I will let you know all I hear ", he says, " especially as to the time and place of their muster. . . . I can do no more without being on the council of Don Francisco de Melo ".¹ Next day he writes that " they have all their troops ready and in good order, and are making great preparations for some considerable undertaking. If I am to believe what I hear, they have designs on this place (Arras) ".² The letter breaks off to ask if the Comte de Toulangeon, Guiche's young step-brother, is not presenting a ' plaisante figure ', in M. le Duc's army, with a certain new horse, of which he is inordinately proud. Toulangeon, one of the liveliest of Enghien's companions at the ' Académie Royale ', was sharing in the campaign as a ' gentilhomme volontaire ' ; Tavannes was there also, and Laval ; Guy-Aldonce de Chabot shared the duties of aide-de-camp with La Moussaye. On April 24th, more definite tidings are dispatched from Arras ; a scouting-party has seen the garrison of Douay evacuating the town and taking the road to Valenciennes. Seven horsemen who know the country, ' brave men, and well-mounted ', are to go that night as far as Valenciennes itself to see whether more troops are passing in. There seems no doubt that at last a crisis is imminent ; ' ils viènent de bonne part ' ; and Guiche wishes fervently "that it may please God to send M. le Duc a happy and glorious success ".³

Melo's strategy had at first produced exactly the result he intended ; the French army was preparing to resist an attack towards the west. This is evident from Guiche's suggestion that he himself was likely to be besieged in Arras ; and also from a letter written by Enghien on April 26th, in which he mentions Landrecies, some thirty or forty miles west of Rocroy, as the most easterly point in any immediate danger. He was, by this time, fairly well-informed as to the strength of the enemy. Four main divisions of Melo's forces were guarding the frontier ; the first, under the young Duke of Alburquerque, was quartered between Béthune and Douay ; the second, in Hainault, between Mons and Valenciennes, under a Belgian noble-

¹ A.C., April 19, 1643.² A.C., April 20, 1643.³ A.C.

man, the Comte de Bucquoy ; the third, under the Comte d'Isembourg, between the rivers Sambre and Meuse ; and the fourth, the most distant from the scene of action, in Luxembourg, under General Beck. Melo himself was directing operations from Lille ; and at the same place the artillery was collected, in the charge of the Comte de Fontaine. Spain, Portugal, Belgium, Luxembourg, and Lorraine had furnished these commanders ; and the troops were of no less cosmopolitan origin ; there were Italian and Walloon regiments among the infantry ; Germans and Flemings among the cavalry. The flower of the army was, beyond question, the native Spanish infantry ; the ' tercios viejos ',¹ whose prestige was then at its height ; it was said of them that their ranks had never been broken by an enemy. Five of these battalions, numbering each about a thousand men, were included in Alburquerque's division.

While Melo and Fontaine, with the more western forces, appeared to be concentrating for the investment of Landrecies, Isembourg, whose troops were stationed nearest to the source of the Meuse, marched upon Rocroy, on the direct route of invasion. At the same time Beck was ordered to bring up his division in haste from Luxembourg, to serve as a reinforcement.

So long as the enemy's movements remained indecisive Enghien could find no more central position for his headquarters than Amiens ; and there he continued until May 9th. By that date it was evident that Melo was directing his forces eastward rather than westward ; though it still seemed unlikely that a point of attack would be chosen beyond Landrecies. Enghien accordingly advanced to Péronne, and thence to Fervaques, on the river Somme. " From that time ", says La Moussaye, " the Prince (Enghien) began to show great impatience to give battle ; preferring, as he said, to hazard that much, than to suffer the shame of losing any place in these early days of his command ". He was only too well aware that the Marshal de l'Hôpital was not likely to share these views ; therefore he very carefully concealed them from him at this stage, and confided his intention only to Gassion, " a man to whom the most perilous actions were easy ". Between them

¹ Literal translation, ' old thirds '. It had originally been the custom for each Spanish infantry regiment to be divided into three parts.

they determined to bring L'Hôpital so close to the enemy that he would have no choice but to fight.

It was at Fervaques, on May 14th, that Enghien received the intelligence which put a final touch to his resolve. At last Melo's designs were made clear. Isembourg had crossed the frontier, and was laying siege to Rocroy. Melo himself, with Alburquerque and Fontaine, had passed by Landrecies and was marching in haste to join him. Their united strength would amount to twenty-six or twenty-seven thousand men. Beck, with a reinforcement six thousand strong, was coming up from the east, and had already attacked Chateau-Regnault on the Meuse. So much was ascertained of the enemy; from Paris came intimations of another kind. Henri de Bourbon wrote that the King could not live more than a few days; the power of the Regency would be doubtful, to say the least; and all the affairs of the Court were in confusion. Viewing these circumstances, he desired M. le Duc to hand over the command to L'Hôpital, and to return at once to Paris, where his presence might be useful. A written form or 'pouvoir', transferring the command, was enclosed in the letter. The Prince does not appear to have had any definite scheme with regard to his son; but a vulture-like instinct made him seek to gather all his family together at such a moment, lest any chance of advantage should escape. Enghien's answer is dated the same day—May 14th. With all due forms of respect, but with most unmistakable clearness, he refuses to leave his post. His letter, as written by a General of twenty-one, five days before his first great battle, deserves to be quoted at length.

“ I have received from La Roussière the letter which you did me the honour to write, and I cannot express my sorrow at being unable to obey you as promptly as I should wish; you must know that we are only one day's march from the enemy, and shall be within sight of them to-morrow. I hear on all sides that they mean to cross the frontier at Vervins; they are already at Hirson. I ask you to think how deeply it would affect my honour if I were to leave the army at such a moment. Moreover, I foresee that we should lose the support of the whole army if I were to abandon them, on the King's death, in full view of the enemy;

and I do not see that I, and one esquire, could be of much use to you in Paris. But if you thought that I should be better able to serve the State and you, alone in Paris, than here at the head of twenty-five thousand men, all loyally intentioned, I would willingly forsake the interests of my honour to do you any service you might ask of me. I implore you, Monsieur, to consider my present opportunity for serving the King, the Queen, and yourself, at the head of an army for which I can answer as long as I am here ; and also the state of affairs if I were to resign ; since M. le Maréchal de l'Hôpital tells me he fears the troops might disperse. I beg of you to let me know plainly what your wishes are, and whether you have any particular interest to serve ; for there is nothing I will not do for you ”.

Enghien dispatched this letter, and dismissed the idea of a further summons from his mind ; knowing perfectly well that, before any reply could reach him, he would have come up with Melo and delivered his final stroke, for better or worse. The assurance with which he makes himself responsible for the safety of the frontier and the fate of over twenty thousand men, is quite sufficiently remarkable ; it would be almost incredible, but for the spirit of the age, with its extraordinary recklessness of human life ; which disposed the average young French prince, or nobleman, to look on war chiefly as a glorified and particularly exciting form of game. Nevertheless, it is probable that M. le Duc felt the weight of his position more heavily than many of his contemporaries would have done ; simply in proportion as he was more highly-strung and more ambitious. War might be a game ; but it was a game in which he would have staked his very soul to excel.

While the French army advanced from Fervaques, passing by Guise and Vervins, Gassion, with a detachment of two thousand light cavalry, was sent on to reconnoitre. His orders were to rejoin the Duke at Bossus-les-Rumigny, sixteen miles south-east of Rocroy, where a council of war would be held. A letter from Enghien to Mazarin, written on May 16th, acknowledges tidings of the King's death ; and passes rapidly from expressions of formal regret to more practical matters :

¹ A.C., May 14, 1643.

“ To-morrow I march on Rocroy, which has been besieged since yesterday ; the day after to-morrow we shall be there. I can assure you that we will undertake nothing ill-advised, but we shall do our best to relieve the place ”.¹

Isembourg had begun his operations before Rocroy at daybreak on May 13th. Melo, Alburquerque, and Fontaine had joined him two days later, and the town was surrounded. With a garrison of only four hundred men, indifferently provisioned, and an attacking force of over twenty-five thousand, the governor, Geoffreville, was not likely to offer prolonged resistance. Melo anticipated that the siege might be an affair of three or four days, at longest. The French army he believed to be still at some distance ; he was fully persuaded of the success of his strategy, and imagined that, if Rocroy could be reduced without delay, he need fear no further obstacle. The way into France, even the road to Paris itself, would be open to him.

The French council of war was duly held at Rumigny on the afternoon of May 17th ; M. le Duc, the youngest person present, presiding, with the utmost self-possession, as Commander-in-Chief. Gassion's report was the first matter under consideration. Leaving Fervaques on May 14th, he had led his reconnoitring party up to the very walls of Rocroy. The thickly-wooded country near the town had sheltered him during the night of the 16th. Before daylight he had detached a hundred and fifty men, who, acting under his orders, flung themselves upon the weakest point in the enemy's outworks. The Italian mercenaries, who should have been on guard, were so completely taken by surprise that, almost before they realised what had happened, they were overwhelmed ; and a substantial reinforcement had been added to the garrison within the walls. Gassion, having accomplished this daring manœuvre, drew off with his remaining force, and, still under cover of the woods, rejoined Enghien at Rumigny. His statement before the Council, as to the position of the besieged town, was as follows :

“ Rocroy stands on a small flat plain, surrounded by woods and swamps. It can only be approached by long defiles (through the woods), excepting from the

¹ A.C.

direction of Sévigny (south-east side) where the worst part of the passage is less than a mile in length. Farther on, this pass widens by degrees, and leans on to the plain, where two armies might be drawn up in fighting order. But the woods we must first go through are so marshy, and the undergrowth so thick, that the troops would only be able to pass them in single column and with great difficulty”.

It was at this point that Enghien first openly placed himself in opposition to the Marshal de l'Hôpital, who, until then, had been allowed to suppose that his influence was quite an important factor in the direction of the campaign. The Duke had practically determined on his own course of action some days before. He was resolved, so he told the Council, to hazard everything for the relief of Rocroy, and for this purpose they must advance with all speed through the defile. The Spaniards, he maintained, could not dispute the passage without drawing off some of their troops from before the town, and so leaving a way open for relief ; while, if the French army could pass the defile in safety, Melo must perforce accept the challenge, and the result would be a pitched battle in the plain. At the same time he laid before them the official intimation of the King's death, which he had reserved till that moment ; and pointed out that the present state of the Government and the great danger of invasion, justified him in running all risks for the sake of disabling Melo effectually. L'Hôpital at first refused to give any kind of sanction to this proposal. He conceded, to some extent, the importance of saving Rocroy ; but as for the suggestion of offering battle, he was dismayed by its rashness. He submitted to the council that, in the case of their defeat, the frontier would be left defenceless. All that could be safely attempted was to keep Melo under observation, and to harass him by occasional skirmishes. L'Hôpital was warmly supported in his opinion by La Ferté, Espenan, La Vallière, and La Barre, the officer in command of the artillery. Gassion, who had been all the while a party to the scheme, seconded the Duke ; so also did Sirot, and Persan. Both sides were equally persuaded as to the force of their own arguments, and the discussion rose high ; till at last Enghien closed it by announcing, in a tone which admitted of no appeal, that all preparations must be made immediately,

as they would march on Rocroy the following day, in the hope of provoking the enemy to a decisive action. L'Hôpital, though by no means convinced, was forced to remember that the Duke was, in point of fact, his superior officer, and gave his consent with a fairly good grace. He consoled himself by reflecting that the Spaniards would probably dispute the pass, and that the engagement might end in nothing more than a skirmish among the woods.

On the same evening Enghien writes to his father, giving a brief account of Gassion's exploit, which he describes as '*une très belle action*,' and begs that the Queen may be told of it. He is writing further particulars, he says, to M. le Tellier.¹ A certain tenseness of style in these letters betrays a state of mind which is nowhere expressed in words, and which the writer himself was not likely to take time to analyse. The whole nervous and intellectual force of his nature was concentrated on the coming effort. Melo was opposing him, and must be defeated at whatever risk or cost of life. Every fibre of his being was strung to the highest pitch; but in the face of all that must be done, and done by him, he had positively no leisure for conscious excitement.

Before leaving Rumigny, "the Duke", says La Moussaye, "disposed his army in order of battle, so that each one might be prepared for this action, the success of which was so important to the honour and safety of France". The fighting strength of this army consisted of twenty-three thousand men: sixteen thousand foot and seven thousand horse. They were to be drawn up in two lines, supported by a reserve corps. In the centre was the infantry, commanded by Espenan; the cavalry was on the flanks; the right under Gassion; the left under La Ferté. Sirot commanded the reserve. Enghien chose his own place on the right, between Gassion's cavalry and the infantry regiment of 'Picardy'. L'Hôpital occupied a corresponding post on the left, next to La Ferté. It was part of the Duke's intention to place L'Hôpital and Gassion as far from each other as possible; Gassion's energy and ability would have had little scope if he had been forced to look to the Marshal for orders.

At daybreak on May 18th, the French army started on their march. By eight in the morning they were

¹ A.C.

nearing the entrance to the pass which led through the woods of Sévigny on to the plain of Rocroy. Scouting parties reported that not an enemy was to be seen in the forest ; but that a mounted force had been observed in the plain beyond. Everything now turned on the question whether the pass itself were held. Gassion, ever ready, with an advance guard of fifteen hundred horse, was the first to enter the defile. He was to send back word if he found it unoccupied. Four hours of uncertainty followed. At midday a messenger came back at full speed through the pass to say that the way was clear. The far end had been watched only by vedettes ; who, at the unexpected sight of the French squadrons, had abandoned their posts and retreated into camp. Enghien immediately gave the word for the whole army to pass the defile. He himself, at the head of two thousand men, was the first to join Gassion on the plain. Espenan followed with the infantry ; and the cavalry of La Ferté and L'Hôpital formed a rear-guard.

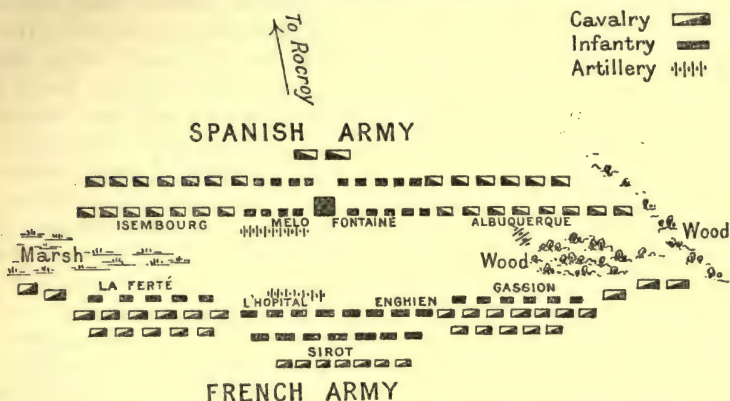
More than one historian of Rocroy has pointed out the obvious course which Melo might have been expected to follow ; namely, to tell off a detachment to guard the pass, while the main part of his army reduced Rocroy. The garrison was in no condition to withstand a long siege ; while, as for the pass, its natural obstacles were such that a comparatively small force might well have defended it successfully. Melo, however, was less bent on the surrender of Rocroy than on the invasion of France ; and for that purpose Enghien's army must be not merely repulsed, but annihilated. The moment in which he was called on to decide between an offensive and a defensive course, came on him more or less as a surprise. Encamped as he was in an enemy's country, the movements of the French troops had been hidden from him ; till, on this same morning of May 18th, there came the startling news that an army was actually entering the woods, and that he must either attack or be attacked within the next twenty-four hours. A council was hurriedly summoned ; and Melo had scarcely announced his resolve to stake all his chances on a general action, when word was brought him that he had no longer any choice. The French were passing the defile, and their cavalry was even now taking up a position on the plain. Melo at once abandoned all

idea of the possibility of checking their advance, and applied himself to drawing up his own forces in order of battle. Thus for the moment the two Generals seemed to be playing into each other's hands. Enghien's situation for the next few hours was, had the truth been known, a most critical one, and a prompt attack would most likely have proved fatal to him. The French rear-guard, with the whole of their infantry and artillery, was still toiling among the difficulties of the pass; and until it should come up, the Duke and Gassion, with a force of some three or four thousand men, were entirely unsupported. All they could do, for the time being, was to range their squadrons, with the help of the ground, in such a way as to hide effectually what might be passing in their rear. Melo, fully engrossed by his preparations, and thinking it most improbable that a large body of cavalry would have advanced so far without support, let his real opportunity slip past.

By six o'clock that evening the last of La Ferté's division had emerged on to open ground. The position chosen by Enghien was on the crest of a low ridge, or ripple, in the plain. To the left was a tract of marshy ground, half swamp, half lake, the 'Pond of Sainte-Anne'; to the right, a small wood, on the outskirts of the forest. Along the strip of raised ground, between these boundaries, the French fighting line stretched for a length of just over a mile and a half. The troops were drawn up in accordance with the orders issued the day before. On the right, fifteen cavalry squadrons under Gassion; on the left, thirteen squadrons under La Ferté. In the centre, fifteen infantry battalions, each numbering from eight to nine hundred men; and immediately in front of them, the artillery,—twelve pieces of light cannon, brought with great difficulty through the defile. Many of these regiments bore historic names; 'La Marine', 'Harcourt', 'Sully', 'Roquelaure'; 'Picardy', the senior regiment of all French infantry; 'Piémont', still bearing the black ensign of their first captain, Giovanni de' Medici; and the Scottish Guards. Sirot's reserve, stationed four hundred paces to the rear, consisted of four squadrons, the 'Gendarmes', and the 'Compagnies Royales', ranged alternately with three infantry battalions.

Below the ridge the ground fell away into a slight

hollow, and rose again to a corresponding height towards the north. Melo adopted the frankly aggressive course of drawing up his forces on this northern ridge. He had, so far as he knew, no reason to fear the result of a decisive battle. His army was superior in numbers ; and his infantry was popularly supposed to be invincible. He was far better supplied with artillery than the enemy ; his heavy cannon had only to be brought a distance of less than a mile, over nearly level ground, to be placed in position. A battery of eighteen guns was posted, and in action, on the northern rise, between four and five in the afternoon. The French troops persevered bravely in taking up their positions under a steady fire ; but by the time their



formation was complete, they had lost from three to four hundred men, either killed or wounded ; among the latter was Persan, an officer who could ill be spared. Taken altogether, the aspect of affairs, as evening drew on, was not too favourable to Enghien, and Melo may well have congratulated himself on having allowed the enemy to come so unreservedly within his grasp. The cavalry on both sides was fairly well matched ; on the Spanish left, Albuquerque opposed fifteen squadrons to Gassion's wing ; Isembourg, with fourteen squadrons of the 'cavalry of Alsace', confronted La Ferté. The Spanish centre, or 'corps de bataille', fully assembled, was unquestionably stronger than the French ; it included eighteen battalions, numbering altogether more than as many thousand men. Fore-

most among them were the redoubtable 'tercios viejos', who advanced to their post 'à grand bruit de guerre'. Fontaine, their commander, whom some writers have called 'Fuentes', but who was, in point of fact, a native of Lorraine, is described as 'one of the first captains of his time'. He had seen fifty years of service; and now, "though his infirmities obliged him to be carried in a chair, yet he none the less gave his orders on all sides". To right and left of the 'tercios', and in their rear, were the foreign mercenaries: Italians, Germans, and Walloons. Melo himself was prepared to take up his position on the right wing, with Isembourg.

The closing incident of the day was provided by a sudden, indefensible action on the part of La Ferté; one prompted either by some secret instruction from L'Hôpital, or by his own desperate eagerness to out-shine Gassion. From his place on the left wing he could see the walls of Rocroy, not two miles away; temptingly accessible, to all appearance, for the whole Spanish force seemed to be concentrating in the plain. Without the shadow of an order from his Commander-in-Chief he set himself to improve on Gassion's achievement of May 16th, by passing a larger reinforcement into the town. Rocroy, he thought, might then be saved, even if the battle were lost. To this end, he not only set his own squadrons in movement, but ordered up five battalions from the left centre to support them, thereby leaving the main body of infantry considerably weakened, and with its left flank entirely exposed. M. le Duc, on the right, discovered that some unauthorised movement was taking place, and came, with indignant haste, to ask who was responsible. He found the foremost squadrons already crossing the marsh and skirting the Pond of Sainte-Anne, which it was intended should serve them as a protection from Isembourg's cavalry. At the same instant Melo's bugles sounded; and the whole of the Spanish centre and right wing were seen to advance at a brisk pace. Enghien watched them with something like despair in his heart. For a moment he could only suppose that the enemy had observed La Ferté's blunder, and was taking advantage of it. In an instant all the dire consequences presented themselves to his mind. The left wing would be cut off, the infantry attacked in flank as well as in front; defeat and disaster seemed

inevitable. His first act was to dispatch an aide-de-camp, armed with a peremptory message, to call back La Ferté. Then, ordering up some of the troops from the second line, to repair the weakness of the first, he waited, in poignant suspense, for further developments. But Melo proved himself, a second time, to have no lightning grasp of opportunity; "according to the Spanish habit of mind"—so it was said of him—"he let the present escape by thinking too much of the future". He had convinced himself that it would be wiser not to fight till next day, when Beck and his reinforcement might be hourly expected; and no sudden impulse was likely to affect his decision. What had seemed to be a general advance was only a movement of the front ranks, to give more space in the rear. The Spaniards came on for a hundred paces and then stopped short, just as La Ferté's horsemen, in some confusion, were returning to their place. There could now be no further question of an engagement that night. The Duke sent for La Ferté, and gave him his final instructions, in language which lost nothing for want of emphasis. He was to go back to his place on the left, and to stay there; when the time came for a general engagement he and L'Hôpital were to keep Isembourg's cavalry occupied; but they were to avoid, as far as possible, making any decisive attack until they were assured that Gassion's wing—forced, by its position, to bear the brunt of the action—had gained a distinct advantage.

This point made clear, and La Ferté duly humbled, Enghien rode slowly back along the lines to the extreme right of the 'corps de bataille', giving a last inspection to the troops as he passed. He was received with enthusiasm. M. le Duc was not destined to be a widely popular character in time of peace; but at such a moment as this his inspired and inspiring qualities outweighed all others. Truly it might be said of him now, as in his schooldays at Bourges: 'Incendit omnes'. Tired as they were after a long and harassing march, and dispirited by the enemy's fire, the soldiers could have had no greater encouragement than the sight of him.

The attack was to be at dawn. Enghien spent the night at the bivouac of 'Picardy', where officers and men alike took what rest they could in the short time

left to them. "Our soldiers", says Sirot, "lay beside their arms, ready to rise at the first sign" Enghien himself, after eighteen hours of hard work and ceaseless anxiety, slept the sleep of youth and exhaustion. La Moussaye, who was with him, gives an impression of the moment; his words were afterwards used, in a famous passage, by Bossuet. "The night", he says, "was very dark; but as the forest was near, the soldiers were able to make so many fires that the whole plain was lighted by them. The armies were enclosed in this ring of woods as though the lists had been drawn for them to fight. The stillness of the night was unbroken by any alarm; and on the very eve of battle there seemed to be a truce".

In the early hours of the morning, before daylight, a deserter from the Spanish camp presented himself at one of the French out-posts and asked to see the Duke. It appeared that he was a Frenchman by birth, and his first act was to beg a free pardon for having served against his country; which Enghien granted, 'subject to the King's good pleasure'. This pardon was the price of two pieces of information; firstly, that Beck's division was now very near, and might be expected by seven o'clock that morning; secondly, that one thousand Spanish musketeers were ambushed in the wood on the right, ready to fire on Gassion's squadrons the moment they should advance. There was no time to be lost in acting on this intelligence; the French were already outnumbered; if they were to defeat Melo, it must be done before the reinforcement arrived. One battalion would have to deal with the musketeers in ambush; and Enghien gave the first signal to the officers of 'Picardy', who silently and swiftly prepared for the attack. By three o'clock the whole army was aroused and ready for action. The Duke 's' étoit laissé armer par le corps'; that is to say, he wore a cuirass; but he refused a helmet,—which he looked on, characteristically, as a mere encumbrance—and "would have no other head-covering than his ordinary hat, which was ornamented with a plume of white feathers".¹ Like the crest of Henri iv at Ivry, this plume was afterwards said "to have served several times during the day as a rallying-point for the squadrons". "Before entering the fight",

¹ *Gazette de Renaudot*, May 27, 1643.

writes Father Mugnier, " my said lord (the Duke) confessed himself, and offered to God, with his whole heart, the glory of the day ".¹ Here was one of the ' supreme occasions ' when his early training held good. The whole army, M. le Duc and his officers at their head, received absolution, according to the custom of the time, before going into action.

As soon as it was light, Enghien, dividing the care of the right wing with Gassion, led up eight squadrons to engage Alburquerque in front ; while Gassion, with the remaining seven squadrons, made a circuit round the far edge of the little wood, which served as cover for his movements, so as to attack in flank at the same instant. The ambushed musketeers, scattered by the unexpected onslaught of the soldiers of ' Picardy ', fled out of their hiding-place, only to fall among the horsemen on either side. It was said that not one escaped. Gassion's cavalry was the first sighted by Alburquerque, who was in the act of turning to receive them when Enghien attacked in front. La Moussaye's account of the action at this point is perhaps the clearest and most concise. " Alburquerque knew nothing as yet of the first engagement (the defeat of the musketeers), and had relied entirely on the musketeers hidden in the wood to cover his front line ; so that he found his resistance much shaken by this attack. He tried to oppose some of his squadrons to Gassion, who was coming up to surround him ; but the danger of making such an attempt in the face of a powerful attacking force was soon apparent. These squadrons, already weakened, gave way at the first charge, and the whole of Alburquerque's troops were flung in confusion one upon the other. The Duc d'Enghien, seeing them take to flight, ordered Gassion in pursuit, while he himself turned short to the left against the infantry ".

This manœuvre,—devised and carried out by Enghien and Gassion, acting in perfect accord,—proved to be the turning-point of the day.² Enghien, at the very outset of his career, showed the essential qualities of his military genius ; the coolness of temperament which could act as a controlling force in the midst of the intense nervous excitement and the joy of battle, which possessed him and seemed to radiate from him.

¹ Father Mugnier to Henri, Prince of Condé, *A.C.*, 1643.

² See Appendix B.

Rocroy might have been another Naseby if Enghien, like Prince Rupert, had allowed himself to forget everything but the fugitives before him. The French cause had been faring badly on the left. La Ferté, anxious to regain his lost credit, had waited obediently till the right wing was fairly engaged before he advanced against Isembourg; but by that time his powers of self-control were exhausted. Zealous and ill-advised as ever, he gave the order to charge at too great a distance; his troops, arriving out of breath, and in disorder, were routed by the first discharge from the pistols of the 'cavalry of Alsace'. In the confusion which followed, La Ferté and L'Hôpital made valiant attempts to rally their men. La Ferté, twice wounded, was taken prisoner; the Marshal, fighting in the second line, was saved with difficulty after his arm had been broken by a pistol shot. Isembourg, following up his advantage, drove the scattered horsemen before him, past the French main position, unarrested by La Barre's artillery or by the infantry of the left centre. La Barre was killed, and the cannon seized; 'Piémont' and 'Rambures' were beaten back with great loss. There remained, however, in the rear, and hitherto immovable, the three thousand men of the reserve; a contingent not to be lightly disposed of. "The day is not lost", Sirot answered, when a distracted messenger brought him the first news of La Ferté's defeat, "for Sirot and his companions have not yet fought".

Three hours had now passed since the beginning of the action. While such decisive results had been obtained to right and left, the centre, slower to engage, had been comparatively idle. Espenan, commanding the 'corps de bataille', had advanced to the attack of the 'tercios viejos', who occupied the centre of the first line of the enemy's infantry; and who are described as awaiting him, 'avec une fierté extraordinaire'. So formidable was their appearance, that Espenan hesitated to engage them before the cavalry could come to his support; and, observing the flight of La Ferté on the left, he drew off after a slight skirmish. Probably the Spaniards would have taken matters into their hands, and advanced in their turn; but it was precisely at this moment that the combined movement of Enghien and Gassion took effect. Turning to the left,

as he parted from Gassion, the Duke found himself in a position to attack the second line of the enemy's infantry from an unexpected quarter. These were the foreign battalions, who formed the Spanish centre rear. Enghien's cavalry, cutting across the field from right to left, disposed of them effectually ; the Germans and Walloons were cut to pieces and the Italians routed, only the troops of the front line were out of the path of the French horsemen, and remained untouched. Enghien, reining up in his successful career, found himself confronted by the disaster and confusion of La Ferté's wing. On this side of the field, only the reserve still held their ground. Sirot had justified his answer ; and if he did not win the whole victory single-handed, as his memoirs would almost have us believe, he certainly contributed largely to it by his firmness and presence of mind.¹ He describes a heated altercation with the *Sieur de la Vallière*, who arrived in despair, telling him that the battle was lost, and that nothing was left but for him to withdraw in good order, as the infantry had already begun to do. Sirot refused to retreat a step ; evidently not believing that *La Vallière* spoke with authority from head-quarters. Instead, he rallied as many of the fugitives as he could lay hands on, —judging by his own account, this phrase may be literally interpreted,—and, having boldly engaged *Isembourg*, held him at bay. It need scarcely be added that Enghien, when later on he was rejoined by Sirot, denied having sent any orders of the kind reported by *La Vallière*.

"The Duke", to continue *La Moussaye's* narrative, "saw clearly that the result of the battle must now depend on the troops which were under his direct control at that moment. In an instant he ceased following the infantry, and passed on, behind the enemy's battalions (of the front line), to attack their cavalry, who had been pursuing the left wing". Thus *Isembourg*, while imagining that only Sirot's troops were left to withstand him, suddenly found himself attacked in the rear by the victorious squadrons of *M. le Duc*. Taken unawares, with his forces still scattered in the pursuit, his discomfiture was complete. *La Ferté* was rescued, the guns re-captured, and the Spanish right wing as entirely routed as the left. Many fled

¹ See Appendix B.

towards the north, and falling into the hands of Gassion received no mercy. Melo escaped; but his 'bâton de commandement' was found on the field, and preserved as a trophy.

Of the whole Spanish army there now remained only the 'tercios viejos', formed in a square, still guarding the artillery, and left standing like an island in the midst of the general ruin. Their admirable order and their 'fière contenance', showed "that they were prepared to defend themselves to the last extremity". Enghien had just received certain tidings that Beck's division was in sight, on the farther outskirts of the woods. His own cavalry were few in number, and had been fighting desperately for four or five hours; nevertheless it was plain that the 'tercios' must be dealt with before Beck could come up. The day might still be lost, if six thousand men, fresh and in good order, were to be joined to the solid phalanx now before him. Every available unit of horse or foot was gathered for a supreme effort, and the word given to attack. "The Comte de Fontaine waited for the advance with great firmness, and would not allow his men to fire until the French were within fifty paces. When the signal was given, the Spanish ranks opened in an instant, and from between them came a discharge of eighteen guns, followed by a hail of musket-shot. Their fire was so deadly that the French could not resist it; and if the Spaniards had had any cavalry left, to pursue their advantage, the French infantry would never have recovered themselves. The Duc d'Enghien rallied his men promptly, and made a second attack, which met with no more success than the first; he charged them, altogether, three times, without being able to break through their defence". But the Spanish ammunition was running low; their losses had been heavy; and now from all parts of the fields the scattered French troops were drawing in. The rescued artillery was brought within range. Gassion had returned from his pursuit on the right, and Sirot came up with the reserve. "Then the Spanish infantry, seeing themselves completely surrounded, were forced to yield to numbers. The officers began to think of their own safety; and the foremost of them signalled with their hats to show that they asked for quarter. The Duc d'Enghien came forward to receive their surrender; but the Spanish

soldiers imagined that he was ordering another attack. In their error, they fired upon him ; and he was never in greater danger during the whole day than at that moment. His own troops, furious at this treatment of their General, considered that the Spaniards had broken faith with them, and avenged the risk he had run by a terrible slaughter ".¹ The shots had scarcely been fired when the French troops attacked on all sides and the weakened ranks at last gave way. The French " came, sword in hand, into the very centre of the Spanish square, killing without mercy ". Enghien, having grasped the true state of affairs, " went everywhere, shouting to them to give quarter ; the Spanish officers and the men as well took refuge near him ". The captains of three ' tercios ', Castelui, Garcies, and Peralta, yielded themselves prisoners to him in person. Fontaine, who had fallen before the last attack, was found lying dead beside the chair in which he had been carried. His death was long regretted by the Spaniards ; the French praised his courage, and the Prince (Enghien) himself said " that if he had not been able to conquer, he would have wished to die like him ".

Such was the famous last stand of the ' tercios viejos ', whose reputation had so long been one of the glories of Spain. La Moussaye's description ends with a tribute of fervent admiration. " The valour of the Spanish infantry cannot be sufficiently praised, for it is a thing almost unheard-of, that after the defeat of an army, a body of foot soldiers, unsupported by cavalry, should have the courage to stand in the open and wait for an attack, not once only, but three times in succession, without giving way ; and it may truly be said that if the greater part of the reserve had not come to join the Duc d'Enghien, that Prince, victorious as he was over all the rest of the Spanish army, would never have broken the ranks of that valiant infantry ". Enghien, in the course of his career, was destined to have many and varied dealings with the Spanish forces, and to gain an exhaustive knowledge of their defects in war ; yet, keeping the memory of Rocroy in mind, he held to the end of his life that, among brave men of all nations, the highest type of courage was to be found in the Spaniard.²

¹ La Moussaye.

² Maréchal-Duc de Gramont, *Mémoires*.

The arrival of Beck's division was still momentarily expected, and Enghien was reassembling his forces to meet him, when from the extreme right came the last of Gassion's horsemen. They reported that Beck, at the entrance of the woods, had met some of the fugitives, who told him of Melo's defeat, and that he had thereupon retreated, in such haste as to leave two pieces of artillery behind him. "When the Duc d'Enghien saw his victory thus assured, he fell on his knees on the field of battle, and ordered his troops to do the same, to thank God for their success". Gassion's Huguenot principles awoke with the same impulse: "Monseigneur", he said, "you are the most glorious Prince in Christendom to-day. Your victory is from God; I will give thanks to Him".

The battle had been won in seven hours. It was now ten o'clock. The rest of the day was spent in calculating the losses on both sides, and in arranging for the transport of the prisoners and wounded to places of safety. Enghien's first act, after giving thanks for his victory, was to promise Gassion that he would ask for him the bâton of a Marshal of France. Of the Duke himself, the account in the *Gazette* says that "God had preserved him in the midst of the great dangers to which he had exposed himself"; that he bore the marks of two musket balls on his cuirass, while his horse had been struck twice. La Ferté and L'Hôpital were both disabled; Tourville was wounded also, but less seriously. The *Gazette* makes special mention of certain officers who distinguished themselves by their courage; notably, the Vicomte de Montbas, who, in the earlier charges twice forced his way into the Spanish square; and in so doing was wounded, taken prisoner, and finally rescued again. On the same list may be found Joachim de Lenoncourt, Marquis de Marolles, surnamed 'le Brave', one of a family of six brothers, all of whom died in action. The French loss was estimated at two thousand killed and about the same number of wounded.

On the Spanish side, the number of the dead was reckoned at the appalling total of eight thousand. Seven thousand officers and men were prisoners, most of them disabled. The 'tercios' had perished almost to a man. One of the few survivors, a wounded Castilian soldier, was asked how many men went to make up his

battalion; and answered, "Count the dead". The French found themselves placed in some difficulty by the almost unprecedented number of their prisoners, who had all to be disposed of in neighbouring towns. Enghien gave orders for the care of the wounded, both his own and the enemy's, "without distinction of rank", says an admiring witness; and went in person to make sure that his instructions were followed. For the moment he seems to have been completely uplifted by the greatness of the occasion; all his best qualities were brought into play. Father Mugnier, with joy tempered by astonishment, writes of his "seriousness in conversation", and his "judgment and knowledge, which surprise the most experienced members of his profession".

The gates of Rocroy were thrown open; the French took up their quarters in what had been the Spanish camp, under the walls; the wounded of every nationality, as many as could be accommodated, were brought into the town to be cared for. All honour was paid to the dead body of Fontaine, which had been carried to the church of Rocroy to await burial; but before night, the Spaniards sent a messenger to ask that it might be restored to them. Enghien granted their request; and further, had the body embalmed, and sent in his own carriage as far as Mariembourg, where Beck had halted, with the remnants of Melo's force. With it he sent "all the almoners, Jesuits, and other clerics of the Spanish army who had been taken prisoners".

M. le Duc made a triumphal entry into the town of Rocroy on the afternoon of May 19th. The date of his victory had a pious significance for many of his countrymen. "It was observed", says a contemporary, "that this battle was won on the day of the Translation of the Head of Saint Louis, one of the Feasts of the Sainte Chapelle. And that it was won by a Prince who was the descendant of that holy Monarch, and who bore his name".

CHAPTER IV

THE VICTOR OF ROCROY

1643 (*Continued*)

At the moment when Enghien, on the field of battle, was giving thanks to Heaven for his victory, the funeral ceremonies of Louis XIII were being solemnised at St. Denis. Lenet, who was present in the train of Henri de Bourbon, describes the impressive scene; slightly marred by the inevitable bickering over some point of precedence between the Houses of Orleans and Condé. On this occasion the Cardinal of Lyons, as 'Grand Almoner', again played a part; and came near to causing a serious disturbance at the funeral banquet, by neglecting to say grace at the table where Henri de Bourbon was presiding, in the capacity of 'Grand-maitre de France'.

The Prince, at that time, had anxieties great enough to distract his mind from all minor slights. On the frontier, as he well knew, the fortunes of his own family, as well as those of the country, were at stake. The latest news of the 'army of Picardy' dated from two days back; and the growing suspense could be felt on all sides, even among events of such supreme importance as the death of one King, the accession of another, and the installation of a foreign Princess—Anne of Austria—as Regent. It was said that Louis XIII in his last hours had spoken confidently of Melo's defeat, which was revealed to him in a vision. "Do you not see M. le Duc giving battle to the Spaniards?" he asked suddenly of his attendants. "Seigneur Dieu! Comme il les mène!" And a little later he added: "I was right to give him the command of my army; though they tried to prevent me". Naturally enough, a few days later, these words were quoted as the result of direct prophetic inspiration, "vouchsafed to a King whose life was full of holiness". Lenet is one of

those who testify to the incident ; but as to its supernatural origin he remains frankly sceptical.

May the 19th passed without tidings of any kind. About midday on May 20th, the chosen messenger, La Moussaye, arrived before the gates of Paris. Following Enghien's instructions, he went directly, not to the Palace of the Louvre, but to the Hôtel de Condé. He had ridden straight from the field after the victory ; he bore no dispatches, except a few lines sent by the Duke to Mazarin ; but the gift of description was his, and the narrative told by word of mouth to the Prince and Princess must have been worthy of the occasion. Meanwhile the news had spread ; it seemed to be in the air, from the moment La Moussaye dismounted in the courtyard of the Hôtel. When he reappeared, on his way to the Louvre, the streets were thronged with a rejoicing crowd, who cheered him as he went. " I am sending La Moussaye to Court ", Enghien writes to Mazarin, " to bring the news of this victory to the King. I know you take enough interest in whatever concerns me to be very glad of it. For this reason I address myself to you, and beg you to reward M. de Gassion's services by appointing him a Marshal of France. I can assure you that the chief honours of the fight are due to him. You will oblige me greatly by doing him this service ".¹ With regard to the action itself, he merely adds, " Tourville will tell you everything else that took place, and I will send you all particulars on the first opportunity ".

This letter might serve as an answer to those accusations which, in more modern times, have been brought against the Duke of having allowed his own credit to be exalted at his officers' expense. Gassion, for his part, was by no means unequal to urging his own claims. He writes, a few days later, to the Cardinal a simple and sufficient account of his exploits, as follows :

" On this occasion I did everything that I ought to have done ; so that M. le Duc was very much pleased. It only remains that I should win the approval of your Eminence, and obtain from you the favour which M. le Duc has asked on my behalf ".²

¹ *Archives Nationales*. See Duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*, iv. Appendix.

² *Archives Nationales*, May 21, 1643.

Whatever Enghien might say of Gassion, La Moussaye had no doubt that M. le Duc, and none other, was the hero of the day. Fresh details only confirmed this opinion in the public mind. La Moussaye, after delivering his messages to the Queen-Regent, left Paris immediately to rejoin the army; but on May 21st came Tourville, his arm in a sling, bringing the further account which had been promised. The Queen received him with marked favour, and assured him that the Duke's request for Gassion's promotion should be granted. La Moussaye carried back with him a first instalment of written congratulations: those sent by the Queen, and by the Condé household. Here, the young Duchesse d'Enghien plays her usual inconspicuous part; her letter, if she ever summoned courage to send one, has not been preserved. Foremost of all is that of Madame la Princesse, dated May 20th; written evidently in a perfect tumult of feeling, and with scarcely any stops:

"My dear child I am so troubled to think what danger you have been in, that I do not know what to say to you and my joy at your good fortune in having rendered this great service to the Queen transports me so that I cannot tell you of my gladness, and also that it has pleased God to preserve you, give thanks to Him with all your heart and never be ungrateful for this blessing which you have received of His goodness, and take care of your health. The Queen commands me to tell you that her joy in this victory is increased since it is you who have done her this service, she assures you of her goodwill, and that I love you more than my life".¹

On the same sheet, below the Princess's signature, are a few lines from Anne-Geneviève de Bourbon, now Madame de Longueville:

"My very dear brother, I am in such transports of joy that I do not know what to say, except that I am at the height of all my wishes, and I think you have no difficulty in believing this. Let me know if there is anything you want, that I may send it to you".²

¹ *A.C.*, May 20, 1643.

² * *Ib.*

During the week that followed, letters rained on M. le Duc: "the first commander", wrote La Meilleraie, "who has ever won a victory for a King of four years old, on the fourth day of his reign". Among a host of formal or extravagant compliments from courtiers of every degree, one voice is heard, distinct and characteristic, speaking in all sincerity, from one soldier to another. The letter signed 'Turenne' was condemned as inadequate by some of Enghien's admirers. Not only was the language too moderate for their views, but the letter itself was delivered by the ordinary courier, instead of by a gentleman messenger, sent expressly for the purpose, as etiquette demanded. Fortunately, there is every reason to suppose that the Duke himself was satisfied. "Monseigneur", Turenne writes, "although you will be less likely to expect an elaborate compliment on your victory from me than from another, you must assure yourself that there is no one in the world more truly glad of it than I am, seeing that it confirms me in the very high esteem I had for you already; not because of your good fortune, but because of the right conduct and presence of mind which you showed during the whole action. Do me the honour, Monseigneur, to continue that of your friendship towards me".¹

For many days the Hôtel de Condé outdid the Louvre itself as a centre of interest. All Paris flocked to offer congratulations, and to make interest with the family in power. Madame la Princesse describes herself as "so surrounded with people" that she can hardly find a moment's leisure. "My rooms are never empty", she writes; "M. de Vendôme,² and his children, are the only people who have not visited me".³ The Duc de Vendôme, it should be added, was only less jealous than Gaston of Orleans each time that any good fortune befel the House of Condé. A fresh outburst of excitement followed the arrival of the trophies of battle; chief among them, the enemy's colours, brought by the Duke's quarter-master, the Comte de Chevers. "Your banners have rejoiced all Paris", wrote the Duc de Longueville to his brother-in-law. Close on two hundred in all, these standards draped the walls of the

¹ A.C., May 21, 1643.

² César de Vendôme, son of Henri iv and Gabrielle d'Estrées.

³ A.C., May 21, 1643.

great hall in the Hôtel de Condé for two days, while arrangements were being made to convey them in state to Notre-Dame. The envy of the House of Orleans was at its height ; carefully fostered by Mazarin, who had no wish to see an alliance of Princes. No one expressed more fervent outward admiration for M. le Duc than he ; but at the same time the Abbé de la Rivière, 'Monsieur's' confidential secretary, was instructed to point out to his master that he, Gaston, "son of France, uncle of the King, and Lieutenant-General of the State", was the only person to whom the colours should rightly have been offered. Monsieur was more than ready to take offence ; and Mazarin was able truthfully to warn Henri de Bourbon, "as if in confidence", that the Duke of Orleans "was in the greatest passion imaginable" ; adding that he (Mazarin) would ask the Queen to do her best to appease him. The Prince felt secure enough of his position to answer, with unwonted spirit, that the Queen's good offices might be kept for another occasion. "My son and I", he added, "know very well how to pay Monsieur whatever duty we owe him. If he is vexing himself over this matter, he can unvex himself (*il peut se desfascher*) as soon as he pleases". As for the standards, he declared they belonged to the Queen, and should be sent to her whenever she thought fit. Enghien's letter to his father, dated May 23rd, says clearly enough : "I am sending the colours to the Queen".

In spite of his defiant attitude, Henri de Bourbon was not without misgivings. Monsieur, he could afford to disregard for the moment ; but in the midst of his satisfaction it dawned upon him that his son, whom he had trained with such care to serve him, might, in the end, prove more of a firebrand than was either profitable or convenient. As he stood in the hall where the trophies were displayed, the Prince turned to Lenet : "This is a great day", he said ; "and God knows that I rejoice in my son's actions. But remember this,—the more fame he wins for himself, the more misfortune will come upon my house. . . . Tell no one what I have said ; but you will think of it often in times to come". And indeed Lenet's after life in the service of the Condé family, was not such as to drive the saying from his mind.

May 28th was the date fixed for the solemn thanks-

giving in Paris. On that day, four hundred of the Swiss Guard and fifty horsemen of the King's body-guard were sent to escort the colours from the Hôtel de Condé to Notre-Dame. As they passed through the streets, and over the Pont Neuf, the people flocked to view the procession, and, as the *Gazette* reports, "admired above all the great Cross of Burgundy on the standards". The whole Court repaired in state to the Cathedral, where—again to quote the *Gazette*—"the sound of cannon from the Bastille, and from the Arsenal, served as a bass to the music of the Te Deum".

Enghien's own formal celebration of his victory took the form of a Te Deum sung in the church of Rocroy, "to the sound of guns and trumpets", a few hours after the battle. Before the thanksgiving in Notre-Dame had been accomplished, he had developed a further plan of campaign and was importuning Mazarin for leave to carry it out. To his father he writes: "We are now the masters of this campaign, and there is hardly anything we might not undertake. I have had twenty-one days' rations of bread made at Guise, and to-day we shall take it with us into the enemy's country; we hear on all sides that as yet they have rallied none of their forces, so I hope we may accomplish something". At the first glance it seemed as though Brussels itself might be the next point of attack; the road was clear from the frontier. But the siege of Brussels must remain a doubtful enterprise so long as Thionville,¹ the chief fortress of the Moselle, was held by the enemy. The Austrian Imperialist forces, which the Marshal de Guébriant² was striving to hold in check on the Rhine, might at any moment turn northwards and advance into the Low Countries, through Lorraine and Luxembourg; the position of this great stronghold assured them a safe passage across the Moselle. M. le Duc decided that Thionville must be invested; and wrote forthwith to demand the supplies necessary for the siege. Mazarin yielded in the end, but he temporised for nearly three weeks; perhaps thinking it salutary for a young and victorious General to learn that his word was not always to be a minister's law. During the interval Enghien was, to say the least, not idle;

¹ In German, Diedenhofen.

² Jean-Baptiste Budes de Guébriant; born 1602; killed at Rothweil, 1643.

between May 26th and June 14th he had taken possession of four smaller places on the frontier : Berlaimont, Aymerie, Maubeuge, and Binche. " If you expose yourself to such unheard-of fatigue, you will not live long ", wrote the Prince ; knowing that his son had more nervous energy than physical strength : " Take care of your health, and keep your courage within bounds ; you have won enough honour ; you must curb yourself. We do not know yet what orders you will have ".¹ Henri de Bourbon could scarcely be expected to sympathise with any fervent military ambition. Fame, for its own sake, had never appealed to him ; he looked on it merely as a stepping-stone to more tangible advantages. " As to your siege, you shall not want for supplies ", he writes to Enghien on June 16th ; " but may God send you success. Here, everyone wonders at your undertaking this difficult and dangerous enterprise, when the honours you have won deserve, not empty praise, but solid reward ; such as the government (of a province) which was promised to me for you a long while ago. In short, Thionville is a scheme of your own, contrary to my advice ; I consented to it to please you, and not because I approved of it ; think it well over, for now you must succeed, at whatever cost ".²

Another matter in which Enghien was exerting himself, as the Prince thought, unnecessarily, was the fulfilment of his promise to Gassion. The Queen-Regent at first had been willing enough to grant the ' bâton ' ; her chief endeavour, at that time, was to gratify everyone. It was soon pointed out to her, however, that the same reward had been promised to Turenne for his services in Piedmont and Roussillon ; and that to promote Gassion—another Huguenot—now, at the very outset of the Regency, might please M. le Duc, but would be more than likely to give offence elsewhere. For this reason she hesitated ; putting forward a succession of reasons why it might be better to delay. Enghien was deeply offended ; partly on Gassion's account, and partly because it was well known that he himself had made the request ; so that the humiliation of a refusal would have been unbearable. He was the more aggrieved, since other applications for favour, on behalf of officers who had distinguished

¹ A.C., June, 1643.

² A.C., 1643.

themselves, had met with little more response. The losses at Rocroy had left vacant several posts, including two or three of the first importance. L'Hôpital and La Ferté were both incapacitated by their wounds. Enghien's wish was to fill these vacancies by promoting men like Sirot, who had proved their worth, and who were already serving with him. Instead, there arrived from Paris an apparently endless succession of General officers; 'maréchaux de camp', who had applied for permission to join 'M. le Duc's army'. Among them all, Gaspard de Coligny, a close personal friend, was probably the only one to whom Enghien gave a warm welcome. L'Hôpital was replaced by a still older veteran, Charles de Valois, Duc d'Angoulême;¹ of whom the Duc de Longueville writes: "I do not think that, viewing his age and his infirmities, he can possibly be of much use to you; but you will find him very obliging, and nearly always of the same opinion as the last man who has spoken".² Naturally, the officers already on the spot resented this inroad, and the Duke was roused to protest; he complains to Mazarin, begging him "to send no more maréchaux de camp; otherwise the confusion will be unbearable". The situation was further complicated by all the new-comers being resolved to serve on M. le Duc's immediate staff, and in no other capacity; they would have nothing to say to the Lieutenant-Generals. "This matter must be settled", so Enghien writes, soon after the beginning of the siege; "at present everyone is furious, and there is no getting any work done".³

Henri de Bourbon would have resented any slur upon his son's interest with the Queen; otherwise, Gassion's promotion, and the deserts of subordinate officers, did not greatly concern him. He was more anxious lest the newly acquired influence of his House should be damaged by too much persistence. Enghien urges him, respectfully at first, to use his influence; then, losing patience, declares vehemently that not one of his wishes has been fulfilled: "I begged the Queen to make M. de Gassion a Marshal of France, and he is no nearer to it now than before; I asked for an appointment as maréchal de camp for M. de Sirot, and for companies for certain officers who had served

¹ Son of Charles IX, King of France, and Marie Touchet; born 1573.

² A.C., May, 1643.

³ A.C., June, 1643.

well. I thought all these things were safe, and I promised them to these gentlemen, who will see now that I cannot keep my word ".¹ Tourville, who carried this letter to the Prince, was charged at the same time with one addressed to the Queen-Regent in person : " A la Reine Régente, Mère du Roy, ma Souveraine Dame ",—" I had begged Your Majesty to acknowledge the services of M. de Gassion by giving him the bâton of a Marshal of France, and the whole army thought him assured of it ; also, to reward some officers, who had done good service, with small appointments. Now that these requests have not been granted, I am obliged to tell Your Majesty that the principal Commanders are so much incensed and estranged, that, if Your Majesty does not satisfy them I cannot answer for the consequences. For myself, Madame, I will not say that my services have deserved anything ; nevertheless, if Your Majesty should be disposed to value them, I humbly implore you to delay no longer in granting me the favours I ask on behalf of M. de Gassion and these other officers ; assuring you, at the same time, that I shall never abuse Your Majesty's goodness towards me, and that I shall remain all my life your most humble, obedient, and faithful servant and subject ".² What the Queen would have thought of this very plain-spoken appeal had it reached her, will never be known ; for the Prince, having taken it from Tourville, read it, and immediately confiscated it. " I have suppressed the letter you sent to the Queen by Tourville ", he writes calmly to his son. " It might have ruined your affairs ; you go too fast, and take things too much to heart ".³ Still, Enghien's representations had done their work ; he had made it clear that he would accept no refusal, and his whole family were roused to effort. The Queen at length gave way to their persuasions ; she had intelligence enough to see that three such subjects as Enghien, Turenne, and Gassion were 'worth conciliating, even at the risk of a few murmurs. Before many days she had committed herself to a definite promise ; and the promotion of the two Huguenot Generals, Jean, Sieur de Gassion, and Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Vicomte de Turenne, was announced in due course.

Engbien, quite undaunted by the responsibility which his father had laid on him for the siege of Thion-

¹ A.C., June 8, 1643.

² A.C., June, 1643.

³ A.C., June 16, 1643.

ville, invested the town on June 19th. Gesvres, who had been exercising a separate command on the borders of Champagne, marched northwards and joined him under the walls. The outset was discouraging to the besieging force ; for, on the night following the investment, the Spaniards, helped by the negligence of the Comte de Grancey—one of the new ‘*maréchaux de camp*’—succeeded in introducing a reinforcement of several hundred men into the town. Enghien’s troops, however, set vigorously to work on the siege operations. La Moussaye describes, with full professional details, the mining of bastions and the construction of a ‘covered way’—a marvel of engineering—across the moat. Letters sent from Thionville to the Court tell of M. le Duc’s masterly direction of the siege, and of how he never spared himself, but “went every day in peril of his life”. The Prince’s letters to his son are full of recommendations to prudence : “Do not hazard yourself without reason, or tire yourself without good cause”, he reiterates ; not, perhaps, from wholly disinterested feelings of affection. Enghien was by far the most valuable political tool he was ever likely to have at his disposal ; therefore his life, and his military reputation, could not be too carefully preserved. The Duke had forbore to accuse Grancey in official dispatches, and his father urges him to expose the blunder, lest his own prestige should be damaged. “Everyone here is astonished at your not explaining the fault of those who allowed the relief to come in, so as to protect yourself from blame. You must be on your guard, for you are feared and envied ; and if you suspect anyone of serving you ill, send me word”.¹ Further instructions are that the Duke is “to confess himself often, and to hear Mass every day”, and, above all, not to spend more money than he can help ; it has been rumoured that he pays “twice as much as is necessary” to the workers in the mines. This last is in answer to an appeal from Enghien, urging the heavy expense of the siege operations ; “*L’argent y vat extrêmement viste*”.

Writing on July 9th, Enghien sets himself a limit of six weeks for the reduction of the town. In the end he kept his word, and left himself a fortnight to spare ; the garrison capitulated on August 8th ; but not before

¹ *A.C.*, June 28, 1643.

the French army had suffered severe individual losses. Gassion, whose daring and energy had never flagged throughout the siege, was dangerously wounded in leading an assault. On the same day (August 4th) a disaster occurred in laying a train under one of the bastions ; a fuse, supposed to be extinct, took effect and caused a terrible explosion. Gesvres was killed, and several others were injured. A less conspicuous misfortune, but one which grieved M. le Duc, as he says, ' beyond measure ', was the loss of ' le jeune Francine ', the esquire who had followed him since his schooldays at Bourges. Francine is described as " a good horseman, one who danced well, and a skilful player on the lute, and at tennis " ; but he had other, more serious qualifications than these, and had been at Enghien's side in every danger during the campaigns of Aire and Arras, as well as at Rocroy. His death was heroic. He had been sent with dispatches from Enghien to the Prince and Mazarin, and was bearing back their answers when he found himself waylaid by a scouting party from Beck's army. Francine was too heavily overmatched to save himself ; he was wounded and taken prisoner, after a desperate resistance ; but even in these straits he contrived to hide his dispatches, and to destroy them, before they could fall into the enemy's hands. He was brought before Beck, who first had him searched for information ; and then, judging his wounds to be mortal, allowed him to be sent back to Thionville, where he died two or three days later :

" Duquel Dieu, par sa grâce, veuille avoir l'âme en paradis ".

So engrossed was Enghien by the progress of the siege that he had little or no attention to spare for a piece of news which should have been of the first importance to him. The Prince writes from Paris that Madame la Duchesse has given birth to a son ; " the most beautiful child in the world ". The joy in the House of Condé was increased by the fact that the Duke of Orleans had only daughters. Indeed, as the members of both houses were well aware, the succession was not too well provided for. The King and his brother were still young children, and infant life was beset by many dangers. There remained only four Princes of the Blood in France ; namely, Gaston of Orleans ; Henri de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, and his

two sons. Thus the birth of the little Duc d'Albret, a 'son of St. Louis', in as direct a line as the King himself, was something of a national event. Enghien, if the truth must be told, showed less pleasure or interest on the occasion than almost anyone concerned. Family life had not, so far, entered into his calculations; it had held no place in his surroundings or in his upbringing. Moreover, at heart, he was as far as ever from being reconciled to his marriage, and disliked the bare reminder of its existence. From the remonstrances addressed to him by the Prince, it seems only too clear that M. le Duc neither wrote to his wife, nor made any mention of her in his letters, till after his mind was set at rest by the surrender of the town; that is to say, till nearly three weeks after the birth of the child. "I am astonished that my son has said nothing to me of his wife's confinement, or of his son", Henri de Bourbon writes to the secretary, Girard, on August 9th. In justice it should be added that the Prince, time-server as he was, had never ceased to champion his daughter-in-law's interests, even when she no longer had an uncle to be propitiated; he countenanced Enghien's neglect as little, now, as in Richelieu's lifetime. He himself had found no difficulty in becoming resigned to a marriage of convenience; he had never been able to understand why his son should not follow his example.

The Spanish garrison marched out of Thionville on August 10th, and on the same day the French troops made their entry. The Duke, and all his staff, walked bareheaded from the town gates to the Church, where they were received in state by the clergy, and listened to a Latin address. This was a form of greeting to which Enghien had early been accustomed, and the answering speech improvised by him in the same language, was the admiration of all who heard it. The surrender of Thionville was the signal for a fresh instalment of congratulations. From the Hôtel de Condé comes a letter written by Madame la Princesse and signed by all the young ladies of the Chantilly clique, those whom their friends had nicknamed collectively 'the angels': "I am quite sure", writes the Princess, "that when you see the conclusion of this letter, you will be not a little grateful to me for having begun it, and for giving the charming persons around me an oppor-

tunity of sending you their messages ; and I pray God may give you grace to bring all your undertakings to a happy close ; and that the joy which has been taken from us by your absence, and by the dangers you are in, may be restored to us again". Then follow the signatures, each one attached to a few complimentary phrases. The original manuscript is not quite complete ; but, from various inferences, it seems tolerably clear that on the missing page were the names of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet and Marthe du Vigan. Marthe's elder sister, ' Mademoiselle de Fors ',¹ is one of the boldest writers ; she claims to be the originator of the whole scheme : " Mademoiselle de Rambouillet is trying to take from me the credit of having suggested that we should write to you ; but I must beg you most humbly not to believe her, for I said it first, a long time ago, only they would not listen to me ; and I think you will do me the honour to be grateful, since you know that the idea of writing does not come easily to me ; besides, it is really I who feel the most profound respect for you, and the greatest wish that you should be assured of it".²

Other messages are more deprecating, but not less enthusiastic, in tone :

" If, after all the beautiful things said by these charming ladies to your Highness, I cannot hope that my congratulations will be welcome ; still I may assure you that no one honours you more completely than I.

" MARIE DE LOMENIE ".³

" It needs great courage to send you a compliment after all these ; but if mine is less well expressed, at least I may boast that it is the most sincere.

" MARIE DE LA TOUR ".⁴

" May the consideration of your safety, which is precious to all who have signed this letter, stay that

¹ Anne Poussart de Fors du Vigan ; married firstly, François d'Albret, Sieur de Pons ; secondly, the Duc de Richelieu, nephew of the Cardinal.

² * *A.C.*, 1643.

³ Marie de Loménie de Brienne ; married Nicolas Rouault, Marquis de Gamaches.

⁴ Marie de la Tour d'Auvergne ; married Henri de la Trémoille, Duc de Thouars.

victorious arm and hasten your return, that you may see again your obedient servant,

“ ANNE DE RAGNY ”.¹

Last of all, and with the greatest appearance of humility, stands the name of the future Duchesse de Châtillon :

“ The others have written before me ; but they must yield to me the attributes of the most respectful and affectionate of your humble and obedient servants,

“ YSABELLE DE MONTMORENCY ”.

The wished-for return of M. le Duc was not long delayed. Three weeks were spent in repairing the fortifications of Thionville and converting the town into a French stronghold. Sierck, and the smaller fortresses of the Moselle, capitulated almost without resistance. But it was already September ; too late in the year to undertake any great enterprise, without embarking on a winter campaign. Enghien saw his troops securely disposed in Thionville and other neighbouring quarters ; gave his orders to Angoulême, who, while no active measures were contemplated, could safely be left in command ; and departed for Paris. Here he was greeted as “ the saviour of his country, and one of the chief supporters of the Crown ” ; his favour was sought on all hands ; while his family lost no time in initiating him into all the latest and most engrossing political and social intrigues of the hour.

No person of any consequence, least of all M. le Duc, could have spent even a few days in Paris without becoming thoroughly involved in one party or another. The Court of the Queen-Mother, in the early days of the Regency, is briefly described by one of its members as “ large and brilliant ; but in a state of great confusion ”. Two principal factions might be more or less clearly defined ; one headed by the House of Vendôme, in the persons of César, Duc de Vendôme, and his sons the Dukes of Mercaur and Beaufort ; the other by the House of Condé. ‘ Monsieur ’, notwithstanding his rank, and many social gifts, commanded no appreciable

¹ Anne de la Magdelaine de Ragny ; married François de Bonne de Créquy, Duc de Lesdiguières.

following ; a more aimless and irresponsible Prince it would have been hard to find. He was entirely unscrupulous in matters of honour, and betrayed his friends as often as it suited his purpose ; but his essential weakness of character, and want of both moral and physical courage, kept him from being a danger to the State. His personality carried no weight ; even in those disturbed times no one turned to him seriously as a leader. The nominal head of the Condé faction was Henri de Bourbon ; but apart from his rights over Enghien, whose value as a family asset was increasing every day, the chief source of his influence lay in his alliance with Mazarin. In the same way the Duc de Vendôme had, in himself, no great personal ascendancy ; the hopes of his followers were pinned to the second son of the House :

" Monsieur de Beaufort
Ce duc si grand, si haut, si fort,
Et de prestance si blonde ".¹

Beaufort was five years older than Enghien, and was gifted with exactly those popular qualities which were lacking in M. le Duc ; more especially an easy temper, and extreme good looks, of an obvious and florid kind ; while in conversation, instead of a restless and sarcastic humour, he showed a reassuring slowness of intellect. He was adored by the people of Paris ; the fishwives, and market-women acknowledged him as ' le Roi des Halles '. Their affection, so a most observant contemporary affirms, was based on three simple facts. Beaufort " was the grandson of Henri iv ; he spoke the language of the markets (les Halles), which was not usual among the grandchildren of Henri iv ; and he had a magnificent head of long, thick, fair hair ".² The writer adds that " it would be impossible to exaggerate the effect produced by these three attributes, on the public mind ". Throughout the summer of 1643 the Queen had allowed herself to be almost entirely governed by the ' King of the Markets ' ; his consequential air on state occasions caused great amusement at the Hôtel de Condé, where he and his friends were nick-named ' les Importants '. Beaufort was ambitious, and by no means as straightforward as his manner implied ; but he had no political ability whatever ; he was no match

¹ Loret, *La Muze Historique*.

² Retz, *Mémoires*.

for Mazarin, who in the course of a few months contrived to oust him completely from favour. Beaufort helped his enemies by presuming on his position, as a man of his particular stamp was certain to do. His crowning indiscretion was that of upholding the cause of the notorious Duchesse de Montbazon,¹ in direct opposition to the Queen. This was in the celebrated quarrel between the Duchesses of Longueville and Montbazon, when the latter circulated a rumour that certain compromising letters, discovered lying on the floor during a reception at her house, had been originally addressed by Madame de Longueville to Maurice de Coligny. The accusation was proved to be unfounded, and Madame de Longueville would have let the matter rest, but Madame la Princesse insisted on reparation for the insult. The Queen, acting on Mazarin's advice, declared her justified, and Madame de Montbazon was publicly humiliated by dismissal from Court. Beaufort, who had long been her slave, took prompt measures for revenge. It was said by some that he had actually laid plans to have the Cardinal assassinated; others believed that he meant to do no more than frighten him, and, if possible, make him leave Paris. In either case, Mazarin, whose personal courage was not his strong point, became convinced that his life was in danger, and appealed for protection. The Queen suddenly realised that the services of this Minister, his ready advice, insinuating manners, and unfailing tact were indispensable to her, and she no longer hesitated before extreme measures. Beaufort was arrested, to the general astonishment, and imprisoned in the fortress of Vincennes. This was the first striking proof of Mazarin's influence. From that time he never rested until every Prince in France had felt the weight of his hand.

Enghien arrived in Paris to join his family in this moment of triumph. M. le Duc takes, as it were, the centre of the stage; the object of universal interest, and 'fort glorieux'. He was too serious a soldier to be vain of his actual military distinction; but he took advantage of the personal prestige which it gave him

¹ Marie de Bretagne d' Avaugour, wife of Hercule de Rohan, Duc de Montbazon. She was noted for her innumerable intrigues; Retz says of her: "Elle n'aimait rien que son plaisir, et audessus de son plaisir, son intérêt".

to act and speak, on all social occasions, exactly as he pleased; and that with an assurance only possible to a young Bourbon Prince of the seventeenth century. In other words, he gave himself the most outrageous airs, with such conviction that they became almost admirable. The train of young men who surrounded him, most of whom had been with him on his campaigns, imitated his manners as best they might; they were known as 'les petits-mâtres', "because they followed him who seemed to be the master of all".¹ The name has since acquired a very different meaning; for no one who modelled himself on a leader as flagrantly careless of his dress and appearance as M. le Duc, could ever have been distinguished as a 'petit-mâitre' in the modern sense. Many of those at Court who had once made no secret of their ill-will, now came forward with offers of friendship, only to find themselves badly received by the Duke, whose tongue spared neither friends nor enemies. One General officer, whose feelings had been tolerably well known, asked him, by way of compliment: "What can the jealous ones say now of your success?" "I don't know", Enghien answered; "but you were just the person I was going to ask".

It had been confidently expected that M. le Duc would spend some time in Paris. Instead, two or three weeks after his arrival, he was dispatched on what seems, at first, a curious errand for an officer of his rank and distinction. Guébriant, beaten back across the frontier, had been urgently demanding supplies and reinforcements; his need had become so pressing that Mazarin decided to allow him a reinforcement of five thousand men, to be drawn from the troops left in Luxembourg under Angoulême. Enghien's mission was to gather up the men of this detachment on the borders of Luxembourg, lead them to join Guébriant on the Rhine, near Strasburg, and then himself return to Paris. The reason for his being sent, in person, on this apparently trivial expedition, was, in truth, simple and characteristic enough: no other leader could have been so counted on to keep the troops together. These five thousand, once incorporated in the 'army of the Rhine', were to form the division commanded by Guébriant's Lieutenant-General, Count Rantzau, a

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

native of Holstein. Rantzau had been eight years in the service of France, and had not spared himself ; he had lost an eye at Dôle and a foot at Arras. But he had no gift for inspiring confidence in those who served under him. To have sent him to Luxembourg in quest of his own troops, would have been a hopeless measure. Discipline was apt to grow lax among men who had been campaigning for months, or even years, with no dependable system of leave or payment. On the long marches from one frontier to another, desertion was an everyday affair ; sometimes a whole regiment would coolly disband itself. Any force setting out under Rantzau would have been greatly diminished, to say the least, before reaching Guébriant's headquarters ; more especially as the German frontier was a notoriously unpopular seat of war. Guébriant's contemporary biographer, Le Laboureur, says plainly that "the dislike to serving in Germany was now stronger than ever among the French soldiers, and among their officers of every degree ; so that it would have been perfectly useless for anyone who had not the Duc d'Enghien's authority and influence over them, to attempt to reconcile them to it".

Enghien, at two-and-twenty, had taught officers and men alike to believe that while they did their part, he would do his. They must obey him implicitly ; in return, he would feed them, and pay them, as long as bread and money were to be had ; and if, when the time came, he sacrificed lives unhesitatingly in battle, they felt it was no more than he had a right to do. The force which met Guébriant at Dachstein, a few miles from Strasburg, had suffered no losses on the way. Guébriant, in relief and gratitude, received the Duke at a magnificent banquet in the Castle of Dachstein. This entertainment, according to the *Sieur de Pontis*, Captain in the ' *Régiment de la Reine* ', and a guest on the occasion, was "one of the finest feasts that was ever seen". Guébriant's correspondence testifies to the preparations made beforehand ; the wood-cock pies, 'adorned with plumage' sent from Strasburg, and the fish from Colmar. One of the magistrates of Colmar writes that "three perch, four carp, and five pike, the best that can be had", are being dispatched, "with two soldiers for an escort". "For myself", he

adds, " I could indeed have wished for the honour of seeing His Highness the Duc d'Enghien, that great Commander, already so famous, and so full of promise, in his early youth (*en son petit âge*)". M. le Duc was the chief guest of honour, although two German Princes were present: Duke George of Wurtemberg, and the Margrave of Baden-Durlach. In the dining-hall were stationed " a number of kettle-drums and twelve trumpeters, three on each side of the hall. Each time that His Highness drank a health, they all sounded together, and twenty or thirty others answered from outside ". The effect, which would have realised Gassion's ideal in music, gave great satisfaction to the company; Pontis considered it " a most charming and agreeable chorus ". Only one untoward incident occurred. Dachstein had been appointed as the general rendezvous of the troops; and Rantzau, whom Enghien disliked so cordially that he would hardly consent to speak to him, arrived at the Castle just before the banquet was over. Pontis had been charged to receive and usher in the guests; he was so much perplexed by the situation that he went to Guébriant, who was sitting at the Duke's table, and said to him in a low voice: " M. de Rantzau is in the courtyard ". The Marshal, no less embarrassed, whispered back: " Leave him there, and pretend not to know ". Rantzau waited for some time in growing impatience; finally, he could bear it no longer, and presented himself unannounced. Guébriant with great presence of mind came forward, in seeming astonishment: " Why ", he said, " you are very late; but there is still plenty to eat "; and at the same moment he ordered " pheasant, and all kinds of game " to be brought in; so that Rantzau, " who was known to be fond of good things ", had no time to take offence at the coldness of his reception.

During the next few days Enghien inspected Guébriant's army, and visited the fortified places in the neighbourhood. He saw the forces of Lorraine and Luxembourg established in their winter quarters; and then, having fulfilled all the duties of a Commander, came back at length to Paris on November 15th. Seven months had passed since he had left there to take up his first command; inexperienced, mis-trusted, and invested with scarcely more than nominal authority. His appointment had been looked on as

the outward and visible sign of Louis XIII's blind adherence to his Minister's dying advice. Now, with the possible exception of Turenne, there was no leader in France who inspired more confidence than M. le Duc.

CHAPTER V

FRIBOURG

1644

WITH the close of his first great campaign, Enghien's life falls naturally into the regular military routine of the time. Six months' campaigning in the spring and summer; six months' relaxation, while the troops were in winter quarters. Officers of high social rank, for the most part, contrived to spend these winter months in Paris, varying them by occasional excursions into affairs of State. M. le Duc, for the present, was content to follow his father's lead in political ventures, provided always that he could feel assured of not being passed over for any especially desirable post on active service. As far as public matters were concerned, the family alliance was unshaken, and continued so till the day of the elder Prince's death. Privately, it was far otherwise; Henri de Bourbon found his son more intractable than ever in domestic affairs. If Enghien had rebelled against his marriage before, he did so now with redoubled vigour; for the more emotional reason that he had fallen desperately in love. In the words of Lenet, "the friendship which M. le Duc felt for Mademoiselle du Vigean had grown into a deep and fervent passion".¹ More than two years earlier, Richelieu had taken decisive measures for the suppression of this attachment; he had removed the Duke from Paris, and had kept him for some time under his own immediate supervision; finding him, incidentally, a most inconvenient charge. His anxiety, it must be admitted, was not entirely on moral grounds. All things considered, it is impossible that Richelieu

¹ Lenet dates Enghien's friendship with Marthe du Vigean from early in 1640; but infers that he did not fall seriously in love with her till a year or so later.

can have expected M. le Duc, situated as he was, to keep clear of flirtation or intrigue. Enghien's way of life was no stricter than that of his companions ; and under most circumstances the Cardinal would probably not have thought it worth his while to interfere. What gave this case peculiar importance, was that Marthe du Vigeon was not in the least likely to consent to play a part in an ordinary liaison. Even in that scandalous age, the writers of contemporary memoirs treat her with respect, and as though her virtue were as much beyond question as her beauty. Voiture compares her to all the symbols of radiant youth ; ' un soleil naissant ' ; ' un bouton épanouissant '. To her friends she was poetically known as ' l'Aurore de la Barre ', from the name of her home at La Barre, near Chantilly. With the exception of Madame de Longueville herself, one only, among ' the angels ' is as ecstatically praised ; the ' adorable Sylvie ', otherwise Isabelle de Montmorency ; but no one thought of bestowing on the future Duchesse de Châtillon, even in her earliest years, a name suggesting the innocence of dawn.

Marthe, young as she was, had already shown herself unresponsive to many suitors :

" Sans savoir ce que c'est qu' amour,
Ses beaux yeux le mettent au jour ;
Et partout elle le fait naître,
Sans le connaître ".¹

To Enghien she was not indifferent ; so all trustworthy evidence tends to prove. M. le Duc had never been considered ' amiable ', in any sense of the word ; but apart from the glamour of his victories, he had other gifts which could make him fascinating. The sheer force of his personality can never have been without effect. Marthe du Vigeon was by no means wanting in spirit or intelligence, and the quality of Enghien's genius appealed to her strongly ; she could also share the intellectual tastes of a Prince who was a scholar as well as a soldier :

" Son Altesse, que le Dieu Mars
Epargna dans tout de hazards
Et que Pallas, sa sure guide,
Couvre partout de son Égide ".

¹ Voiture.

Beauty without wit was not much appreciated in the Chantilly circle; and it is clear that, even in that chosen company, Mademoiselle du Vigean could hold her own.

The danger which Richelieu had foreseen was the natural result of Marthe's disposition and principles; he had delayed it, but he was too late to avert it altogether. Throughout the winter which followed the Rocroy campaign, rumours were circulated that M. le Duc was making every effort to procure the annulment of his marriage. His plea, ostensibly, was that he had been forced into the contract as a minor, and against his own will; both of which facts were certainly indisputable. Madame la Princesse, needless to say, took her son's part, as openly as she dared; she undertook to broach the subject of the 'démariage' to the Queen, whose consent was indispensable; and she succeeded, for the moment, in keeping the whole project a secret from the Prince, her husband. The letters of one Gaudin, addressed to the diplomat Servien, whom he kept in touch with Court matters, give some idea of the state of family relations at the Hôtel de Condé. Writing a week after Enghien's return from Germany, he declares that "His Highness of Enghien has not seen his wife since he arrived; unless it was three days ago, when the Prince reprimanded him". Some days later he reports again "M. le Prince and the Duc d'Enghien are still disagreed. M. le Prince gave the Duc d'Enghien another sound reprimand, in the presence of Madame, his wife, and exhorted them to love each other". Henri de Bourbon was just then chiefly engaged in carrying out a long-contemplated scheme of his own in connection with the interests of his daughter-in-law: a protest against the clause by which Richelieu, in his will, had cut off the Duchesse d'Enghien from her inheritance, on the grounds that he had already provided her marriage portion. M. le Duc took no part in this undignified struggle, having declared his willingness to renounce all claim to any such legacy, either for himself or his son. But the Prince was not to be defrauded; after a long and humiliating suit, and many personal recriminations between him and the rival claimant,—the Duchesse d'Aiguillon,¹—he made

¹ Marie-Madeleine de Vignerot, Duchesse d'Aiguillon, great-niece of Richelieu.

good his cause, and secured possession of a substantial sum.

While the head of the family was thus preoccupied, Madame la Princesse had seized the opportunity to approach the Queen Regent ; it was a bold measure, but therein lay the only hope of success. In the end, the shade of Richelieu still seemed to prevail. Gaudin's letter of December 4th, 1643, records what was, in effect, the death-blow of the whole scheme. " Madame la Princesse has spoken to the Queen, touching the annulment of the Duke's marriage ; but the Queen will not hear it mentioned ". Whether this attitude was due to personal scruples, or solely to Mazarin's advice, does not appear. Mazarin, it is said, might have consented to the marriage being set aside, but for an unromantic conviction that he could not trust M. le Duc at liberty.¹ Once free, he might be enterprising enough to secure some more powerful alliance, which would make him independent of a Minister's favour.

If Enghien's passion had left him more open to reason, he must have seen that, without the support of either Queen or Cardinal, his case was, to all intents and purposes, hopeless. He was married, according to all the laws of Church and State ; he had a son ; and now, in his father's eyes at least, this inheritance from Richelieu would forge another chain. But he refused to be convinced ; and, in any case, he allowed no principles to prevent him from paying his court openly to Mademoiselle du Vigean whenever occasion offered. The Prince's exhortations had fallen on deaf ears. M. le Duc would not even consent to be present at the christening of his son,—Henri-Jules² de Bourbon,—which, in striking contrast to his own baptism, took place privately, without any show of rejoicing. The Duchesse d'Enghien had made no party for herself, and his attitude, on the whole, drew forth sympathy rather than scandal. Meanwhile the flirtations of the ' angels ' and the ' damoiseaux ' at the Hôtel de Condé or at Chantilly, were carried on as before ; all with as little seriousness as was humanly possible :

" Temps où la ville, aussi bien que la cour,
Ne respiraient que les jeux et l'amour ".

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² The second name was that of Mazarin, who stood sponsor.

The prevailing spirit of 'la bonne Régence' seems to be wholly summed up in St. Evremond's lines; they can never cease to be quoted as long as the history of the age is read. Time after time the circle at Chantilly was broken by some tragic loss; each campaign brought a lengthening roll of the 'damoiseaux' who had gone out to the wars, never to return. But the victims themselves suffered gaily; and the survivors, for the most part, went not less light-heartedly on their way; 'les jeux et l'amour' triumphed.

Such were the conditions of the society which Enghien left in Paris when the campaigning season opened in 1644. The death of Guébriant at Rottweil, barely a fortnight after his last parting with the Duke, created a vacancy which had been filled by Turenne. Thus the 'army of the Rhine' was already provided for. Monsieur, seized with a sudden and short-lived martial ardour, demanded the 'army of Picardy' for his portion; there was no reason to suppose him efficient, but his rank, as well as his office of 'Lieutenant of the Kingdom', made refusal impossible; and he was dispatched to take up his command on the north-western frontier. Enghien, in this case, would willingly have accepted the post of Lieutenant-General. The Belgian frontier was the country best known to him, and where he most wished to serve. There would have been no loss of dignity involved; for any 'son of France' must inevitably take precedence, in name at least, over other Princes of the Blood; and, since he had not yet gauged the force of passive resistance, he probably felt equal to the task of imposing his will on Monsieur if occasion should arise. Monsieur, however, had no intention of appointing an energetic young cousin to overrule him, and drag him into hazardous enterprises. He chose Gassion and La Meilleraie for his subordinates. To Enghien was given the 'army of Champagne', together with the government of that province. May 10th found him entering on his duties at Verdun. He was to hold a force of ten thousand men in readiness to march, either northwards to support the 'army of Picardy', or southwards to join Turenne and the 'army of the Rhine'; the direction to be determined by the course of events during the next few weeks. Monsieur was occupied in besieging Gravelines, an undertaking which, as conducted by him and

by his favourite adviser, the Abbé de la Rivière, was soon declared to be "a bottomless pit, for the sinking of men and money". Not that Gaston himself was a daring or reckless commander; but he was quite incapable of authority over such men as Gassion and La Meilleraie. The two Marshals delayed operations indefinitely, by quarrelling with each other, and the siege was prolonged from week to week, with no apparent advantage.

Turenne, on the German frontier, was opposed to an adversary fully worth of him; a soldier of true genius, François de Mercy, a native of Lorraine; now in the Austrian service and in command of a Bavarian army fifteen or sixteen thousand strong. Mercy had defeated Rantzau, and scattered the 'army of the Rhine' at Tüttlingen, after the death of Guébriant. Turenne, succeeding to the command, had gathered up the fragments of an army and carried on the campaign; but he was hard pressed by Mercy, and might need reinforcement at any moment. A third power to be reckoned with was that notorious Prince-errant, Charles iv, Duke of Lorraine, whose adventures deserve a volume to themselves. Born in 1604, he had succeeded to the Dukedom at twenty; and at thirty he had been deprived of his inheritance by Richelieu's annexation of Lorraine to France. Since then he had been in the unusual position of a sovereign without a throne, but still at the head of an army; his force, if small, was efficient; and he was prepared to sell it, and himself, to the highest bidder. Mazarin would have been more than willing to secure his services, and had already entered on negotiations with him; but Duke Charles, after much diplomatic hesitation, decided in favour of the Austrian Emperor, Ferdinand ii. The troops of Lorraine were now stationed east of the Moselle; and part of Enghien's task, so long as he remained at his present post, was to hold them back from effecting a junction with Beck in Luxembourg.

M. le Duc's Lieutenant-General for the coming campaign was his friend the Marshal de Guiche, a choice which gave him great satisfaction. Guiche could not by any means be considered as an ideal companion of youth; but he admired Enghien in all sincerity, and served him with devotion. The 'maréchaux de camp' were three in number: Espenan; the

Comte de Tournon, a promising young officer, one of the 'damoiseaux' of Chantilly; and Philippe de Clérambault, Comte de Palluau, afterwards a Marshal of France. The artillery was commanded by Aymar de Chouppes, a tried soldier, who through several campaigns had been attached to the Marshal de la Meilleraie. Chouppes, in his memoirs, asserts that only with the greatest difficulty could an officer be found to serve under the Duke in this capacity. The appointment lay with La Meilleraie, 'grand maître de l'artillerie,' whose privilege it was to nominate the artillery officers for the whole army. Enghien was on bad terms with La Meilleraie; according to Chouppes, he resented the Marshal's obtaining a post in the 'army of Picardy.' Therefore, as soon as it was known that a certain Comte de Montmartin, a relation of La Meilleraie, was to be given charge of the artillery in the 'army of Champagne,' M. le Duc announced that "M. de Montmartin should not so much as set foot in his camp", and demanded another officer of his own choosing. La Meilleraie hesitated; he could not yield his whole prerogative of choice; yet where was he to find an artillery officer valiant enough to face M. le Duc, under the circumstances? Chouppes, hearing the question raised, came forward, and offered himself. "The Marshal", he says, "protested at first, that he did not wish me to make an enemy of M. le Duc d'Enghien, who was a great Prince, young, and of a violent temper". "I believe", answered Chouppes, "that he is too generous not to do justice to any gentleman who serves the King well and does his duty honourably; I should feel that I insulted him if I thought I had anything to fear from him, so long as I served as I ought". La Meilleraie, much relieved by this heroic frame of mind, and "charmed to be out of his difficulty", gave him the appointment forthwith. Enghien received the new officer coldly, "but made no disagreeable remarks"; and, on the whole, may fairly be said to have justified the confidence reposed in him.

Chouppes, as a judge of his contemporaries, is not always to be trusted, but the pages just quoted seem to bear the stamp of truth. M. le Duc, wise on occasion beyond his years, could also at times behave exceedingly like a spoilt child, more especially when his

energies were not directed on active service. His administration as Governor of the province, in civil matters, could hardly be pronounced a success. One of his most conspicuous actions was to identify himself with the cause of a very worthless young man of his acquaintance, the *Sieur de St. Étienne* by name, who applied to him for help in a discreditable adventure. *St. Étienne* had eloped with an orphan heiress, *Mademoiselle Claude de Salnove*, whom he carried off from her home at *Rheims*. Her relations asserted that he had done so without the girl's consent, and were prepared to use force to bring her back. *St. Étienne* appealed to the Duke, by whose order *Mademoiselle de Salnove* was placed under lock and key in a convent at *Mézières*. By this time, however, she had discovered *St. Étienne's* true character; he was brave neither in love nor in war, besides being penniless, and deeply in debt. With the connivance of her family she escaped from *Mézières* and was brought back to *Rheims*; where, for greater safety, she again took refuge in a religious house. *Enghien* was not greatly concerned over *St. Étienne* or his affairs, but he was enraged at finding his own authority disregarded. He ordered *Champlâtreux*, 'intendant de justice' of the province, to go with an armed force and 'escort' *Mademoiselle de Salnove* on her return to *Mézières*. This was a step which nothing could justify. The *Marquis de Rotelin*, Governor of *Rheims*, and the only person who emerges with credit from the incident, shut the gates of the town and refused entrance to *Champlâtreux* and his guards. Both parties now appealed to the *Queen-Regent*; the *Salnove* family calling for redress against *St. Étienne*; *Enghien* furiously complaining of *Rotelin's* 'insolence', and demanding that "the *Queen* shall not protect all the little rascals in my territory". But no degree of indignation could establish a case for the Duke. His position was made still more hopeless by the conduct of *Mademoiselle de Salnove*; 'une petite fripone', as he calls her, who now protested that she would have nothing more to do with *St. Étienne*, and that she hated him 'comme un diable'. This being so, no course remained but to restore her to her family; though it was conclusively proved that the elopement, in the first instance, had certainly been effected with her full consent, if not at her suggestion. *Enghien* gave up

St. Étienne's quarrel for good and all on hearing, soon after, that he had refused a duel with the brother of Mademoiselle de Salnove, for no better reason, apparently, than sheer disinclination. A man who would not fight, could not hope for sympathy from M. le Duc.

Fortunately, perhaps, for his reputation, Enghien was not long left to exercise the duties of a civil Governor. Throughout June, Mazarin hesitated over the rival claims of Gaston and Turenne. At length, on a definite order to join the 'army of Picardy', Enghien left Verdun, and assembled all his forces to march northwards, cutting off Beck from an advance into Flanders. Near Mouzon, almost on the frontier, he paused; the communications from Turenne were not reassuring. Mercy had passed through the Black Forest and was laying siege to Fribourg.¹ Turenne, from his camp at Schallstadt, had made vigorous efforts to dislodge him, but in vain. The Bavarian troops, firmly established on the only available piece of level ground before the town, defied all attacks. The 'Army of the Rhine' consisted mainly of a force in something of the same position as the troops of Lorraine; eight or nine thousand 'Weimarians', whom their Duke, Bernard of Saxe-Weimar, had contracted to place at the disposal of the King of France. At the time of Duke Bernard's death, some five years earlier, the transaction had been renewed by his General, Erlach, a Swiss mercenary. It was an officer of Weimar, Kanowski-Langendorf, who now commanded the garrison in Fribourg. Towards the middle of July, Turenne's letters to Mazarin become more and more urgent: "The enemy's having crossed the Black Forest, and the investment of Fribourg, make it impossible for me to move from here, and Your Eminence will see that I can make no advance in the direction you indicate; if the state of affairs were to allow three or four thousand men to join me, coming by Saverne, or along the lower Rhine, it would be of the greatest importance. . . . The enemy came within reach of us, at the foot of the mountains, with the intention of fighting, and I tell your Eminence frankly, I had no mind for it in our present position; for it is very certain that

¹ Freiburg-in-Breisgau. The French alternative is preferred to the German in the case of all frontier names.



past misfortunes have created some apprehensions in our army ; a reinforcement, if we had it, would give all our troops fresh vigour. . . . I have news that the Bavarians expect a reinforcement from the troops which the Duke of Bavaria is raising in his own country. If it is true, and if no help is sent to this army, I fear we shall have to retreat, and thereby ruin the whole plan of campaign". By July 21st, Mazarin was so far influenced as to send a dispatch authorising, though not positively ordering, M. le Duc to reinforce the 'army of the Rhine' at the earliest possible date. Enghien, in response to pressing exhortations addressed directly to him by Turenne, altered his route, and turned immediately to the south ; crossed the Moselle at Metz, and advanced upon Fribourg with such speed that Turenne himself was amazed. "I hear that you are to be at Saverne to-day, which gives me great joy and astonishment", he writes on July 29th ; "I beg of you, Monseigneur, to continue this haste, and I trust that the expedition may bring you much renown".¹

Turenne was perfectly aware that the Duke's arrival would relegate him, in name at least, to the post of second in command. Enghien's rank alone might have been waived ; in his early campaigns he had been simply a 'volontaire' ; but now, his rank and his reputation together were conclusive. Writing to Mazarin on the subject of a possible colleague, Turenne says plainly : "If it should be M. le Duc d'Enghien, I will obey him as I ought ; if it should be anyone else, I will do my best to accommodate myself to him". Officially, the two Marshals, Turenne and Guiche, were placed on the same footing ; each held a General's command under the Duc d'Enghien, Commander-in-Chief, or 'Généralissime'. Guiche was supposed to direct the 'army of Champagne', or, as it was now called, 'of France' ; Turenne remained in charge of the 'army of Weimar'.² Practically the difference was considerable ; for Enghien himself stayed with the 'army of France', knowing well which of his

¹ A.C.

² The word 'army' was then used by French writers to denote any body of troops commanded by an officer of not lower rank than a Lieutenant-General ; whether acting independently, or with other such bodies under a Commander-in-Chief. Like other military terms of the period, it is often so loosely employed, that consistent translation into a modern term, such as 'brigade', or 'army corps', could scarcely be made without misapplication.

subordinates was less in need of supervision. Guiche he liked, and found socially congenial; Turenne he respected, and continued to respect, in spite of both public and private differences, to the end of his life; a fact all the more noteworthy, since respect was not a feeling easily aroused in M. le Duc. "The Prince and the Vicomte were of very different characters", says the Chevalier Ramsay, Turenne's eighteenth-century biographer; "but, inspired by the same love of the public good, they entered completely into each other's views, and their relations were undisturbed". "Love of the public good" is not altogether a justifiable phrase, particularly where Enghien is concerned. One common sentiment there was, beyond question, which held him and Turenne closely together; but it was not patriotism, or even loyalty; it was the genuine and absorbing love of their profession. Ramsay might well speak of the 'different characters' of his two heroes; they were scarcely less unlike in mind than in person. Outwardly, the contrast was complete, between Enghien's slight figure, eagle face, and extraordinarily vivacious presence; and Turenne's well-known air of solidity and profound reflection; the inscrutable expression of his eyes and mouth bearing out contemporary records of "obscurity in his disposition and in his speech".¹ Enghien was as French in temperament as he was by birth; Turenne, the grandson of William the Silent, showed more than one trace of his Dutch ancestry.² Intimate friends they never were, and perhaps could not have been; so wide apart were their tastes and convictions on every subject save one. Yet it is impossible not to be struck by the force of this, the one passion which they shared; the curious sympathy and sense of mutual understanding which it brings to all their intercourse, and which can be felt, in later years, piercing even through bitter personal dissensions; till at last, as it was truly said, "in studying these two men we may learn from each what honour was due to the other".³ For the present, and for some time to come, there was no sign of disagreement. Turenne, the elder by ten years, had, as he says, already conceived "a very

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

² Turenne was the second son of Henri de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, and of his wife, Elisabeth, Princess of Orange-Nassau.

³ Bossuet: "Oraison funèbre de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé".

high esteem " for M. le Duc before the campaign of Rocroy. His own letters show that he was entirely willing to serve with him, or, if necessary, under him; he professes this readiness not only to Mazarin, but in his private correspondence as well: " If M. d'Enghien is to command the reinforcement, I shall consider it an honour to serve under his orders ".¹

The actual meeting of Enghien and Turenne took place at Brisach² on August 2nd. The ' army of Weimar ' had withdrawn from Schallstadt, and was now encamped at Krotzingen, a few miles farther on the road from Fribourg. Here the troops were to concentrate, while Brisach, from its commanding position, was chosen as a rendezvous for the first council of war. Five days before this meeting there had been a change in the aspect of affairs; at Benfeld, M. le Duc found word awaiting him that his relief force would be too late to save the town. Fribourg had surrendered; prematurely, in the opinion of Turenne, who accused Kanowski of having done less than his duty. Mercy had, so far, shown no signs of moving. The ' apprehensions ' of Turenne's army vanished before a reinforcement nine thousand strong, commanded by M. le Duc; and the only question before the council at Brisach was how best to force the Bavarians to a general action.

The plan of Fribourg published by Ramsay, and supplemented by La Moussaye's narrative, shows most clearly the situation of the town on the outskirts of the Black Forest range; before it, a little plain ' shaped like a crescent ' ; mountains behind it. To the right of the crescent, looking from Brisach, the steep sides of an outlying height, the Schönberg; to the left, the Mooswald, an impracticable forest. The plain, it should be added, was called so only by courtesy, or by comparison with the surrounding heights; it was a tract of uneven ground, marshy in places, and offering no facilities for an attack. Mercy was posted with the mountains in his rear, and with a powerful detachment of infantry ready to defend the approach from Brisach, past the foot of the Schönberg; his headquarters were at Uffhausen, a small village east of the town. It would be hard to imagine a stronger position, held by a commander better able to take full advantage of it.

¹ Turenne to his sister, July 10, 1644.

² Alt-Breisach.

The council at Brisach has been reported in detail by two of those who took part in it; Guiche, and Aymar de Chouppes. Espenan and Tournon, were also representing the 'army of France'; Palluau, with the rear-guard, did not arrive till evening, and went straight into camp at Krotzingen. With Turenne were the Marquis d'Aumont, his Lieutenant-General; and one 'maréchal de camp', Reinhold von Rosen, known to French soldiers as 'le vieux Rose',¹ the Livonian soldier of fortune who had commanded a cavalry regiment at Lutzen, then joined the Weimarian forces, and entered the service of France with them. Erlach, now Governor of Brisach, claimed a voice in right of his office, and, as both witnesses are agreed, was the leader of the party which opposed Turenne. Enghien, having only that instant arrived on the scene of action, was forced to rely entirely on others for information. Erlach's opinion was that there should be no attempt to force the road between Brisach and Fribourg; it was the one obvious approach, and Mercy's troops were guarding it from the lower slopes of the Schönberg. He suggested following the left, or opposite, curve of the crescent, skirting the Mooswald, by the little town of Denzlingen; making no immediate attack, but passing on up the long defile of the Glotterthal, which opened west of the town, and gaining a position some way to the enemy's rear. By so doing, they would cut off Mercy's supplies and close his nearest line of retreat; the Bavarians "must either die of hunger, or be obliged to come out and give battle on less advantageous ground". Guiche was inclined to support this view; "but", he says, "the Marshal de Turenne assured us that he had reconnoitred a pass (round the far side of the Schönberg) by which his troops could march to attack the enemy in their camp, while at the same time the Duc d'Enghien might engage the infantry on the slopes; and his advice was accepted".² The objections urged to Erlach's plan were the length of time necessary for carrying it out, which might end in Mercy's escaping them altogether; and the long distance of exposed ground that must be covered. Coming from Krot-

¹ Also called 'le bon Rose', to distinguish him from his two brothers; Woldemar, 'le furieux', and Johann, 'le boîteux'.

² Maréchal-Duc de Gramont, *Mémoires*.

zingen, the French army would be forced to pass before the whole length of the enemy's camp, giving Mercy the opportunity of attacking either in flank or in rear. Enghien, with whom the final decision rested, did not hesitate; Turenne's advice seemed to him not only sound, but irresistibly attractive as well. "The bright eyes of danger" shone before him, and he followed. Chouppes also represents Turenne as the first to counsel an attack; but he makes, further, the unjustifiable accusation that this course, with all its difficulties, was put forward out of jealousy, with the intention of tempting M. le Duc's ambition, and embarking him in 'une affaire épineuse'. Turenne and d'Aumont, so Chouppes affirms, both declared positively that Mercy's camp was not entrenched, and purposely made no mention of the fortifications on the Schönberg. As it was quite impossible, in the circumstances, that Turenne should escape implication in any failure of Enghien's, such malice is hardly credible; besides being inconsistent with the Marshal's whole character, and with his course of action on this and every other occasion.¹ Turenne may not have been fully aware of all that Mercy had added to his defences since the position had last been observed from Schallstadt; but however clearly he realised each obstacle, the drawbacks to the alternative scheme would still have existed, and his advice would probably have been the same.

Early on the morning of August 3rd, the Duke himself, with Turenne, Guiche, and others, went forward to reconnoitre from the nearest possible point to the enemy. Then, indeed, there was a moment's hesitation among some of the officers when Mercy's full strength was revealed, and Erlach's suggestion may well have been renewed. But, for better or worse, it was not in Enghien's nature to turn back at such a crisis; nor is there any evidence to show that Turenne was one of those who favoured a change. He still maintained that the gorge circling the mountain was not impassable, and that he could force a way through to the camp at Uffhausen. Enghien, with Guiche and the 'army of France', was to undertake a

¹ Ramsay asserts that the idea of the combined attack was *originated* by Enghien; but this does not seem to be supported by any authority nearer the time.

frontal attack on the fortified side of the Schönberg. The position to be carried was a ridge, or spur, of the mountain, extending a little way into the plain ; sloping towards Fribourg and Mercy's camp on one side, and towards Brisach on the other. Five battalions only, of the Bavarian infantry, had been told off for its defence ; but there were natural advantages which atoned for any lack of numbers. The ' vineyards of Fribourg ' clothed all the mountain's lower slope ; up the steep ascent from the plain the vines were planted, in a succession of terraces, supported by straight earthen walls, four feet in height. Six hundred men, with five pieces of light artillery, occupied the principal fort ; the rest were posted in smaller redoubts, or barricaded behind tree-trunks, which they had cut from the surrounding fir-woods, and piled together in the form known as ' abattis '. Beyond the spur, the mountain itself rose sharply, preventing any attack from above. This position once gained, Enghien's troops might bear down straight upon Fribourg ; Turenne, if the attack at Uffhausen were successful, would join him before the town. One condition was evident ; if the combined movement was to succeed, the two attacks must be absolutely simultaneous ; Turenne's at Uffhausen, Enghien's on the Schönberg. Communication would be impossible on the march, when once the ' army of Weimar ' had entered the ravine ; but before the two forces separated, the Duke, so it is recorded, set two watches to the same moment,¹ and gave one to Turenne, telling him to engage the enemy at five in the afternoon ; the earliest hour by which an army could have circled the base of the mountain.

By five o'clock Enghien's six battalions of infantry were drawn up in order at the foot of the slope, waiting for the word to attack. Espenan was to lead up the first two, from the regiments ' Enghien ' and ' Persan ' ; Tournon following with the men of ' Conti ' and ' Mazarin-Français '. M. le Duc meanwhile submitted, with considerable effort, to the received idea that a Commander-in-Chief should not begin by leading an attack of this nature in person. Guiche, the ' marécheaux de bataille ', Leschelle and Mauvilly, and the two remaining battalions stayed with him.

¹ Chouppes, *Mémoires*.

Palluau, in charge of the cavalry, was to guard against the danger of a sortie from the enemy's camp. Espenan's men faced the slope bravely; they came within a few yards of the first barricade, while from behind it the Bavarian infantry kept up a fierce, incessant fire. But to break through the defences seemed hopeless; and under the hail of musket-shot the leading battalions began to give way. Their lines broke; and the men took refuge in the woods of the upper slope, gaining safety for the time, but cutting themselves off from retreat. All this was observed by M. le Duc, who, with his little group of officers, farther down the hillside, had advanced as near as was possible without actually sharing in the attack. 'Conti' and 'Mazarin' had scarcely yet begun the ascent. Enghien exchanged a few hurried words with Guiche, and the next moment was seen on foot, climbing through the vineyard at the head of the soldiers of 'Conti'. One officer, it seems, tried to dissuade him; "and I thought," wrote Guiche, describing the incident, "that in another instant the Duke would have run him through". Guiche himself, with Tournon and the whole staff, had likewise dismounted and joined one or other of the battalions; at the head of 'Mazarin' was the heroic figure of Jacques de Castelnau,¹ 'maître de camp lieutenant', one of the bravest and best soldiers of his time. Enghien led the way with an energy, an almost superhuman fire, which inspired 'all the courage imaginable'. Tradition says that he flung his 'bâton de commandement' over the barricade, and called to his men to come with him and fetch it out. What is certain, is that he was among the first to scale the defences, and that the rest followed him blindly. The Bavarians were driven from their entrenchments with great slaughter; some escaped into the woods, but many more were killed on the spot, defending themselves to the last, asking no quarter, and receiving none.

The ridge was captured; not without serious loss, nor beyond danger of being re-taken, if Mercy should seize the occasion to organise an attempt; but still, so far, the 'army of France' had done its appointed task. Evening was closing in, and before night fell, Enghien made a rapid survey of their position. Turenne

¹ Afterwards Marshal of France; killed at the Battle of the Dunes, 1658.

had attacked ; but he was still out of sight, and the noise of cannon could be heard from beyond Uffhausen. This engagement, and the increasing darkness, would secure the Schönberg from Mercy's attentions for the present. Sound was the only means of communication possible under the circumstances ; and as soon as the infantry had reassembled, the Duke ordered a great flourish of drums and trumpets, to make known, if might be, to the ' army of Weimar ' that his share of the work was done. One fort only remained in the hands of the enemy, and Chouppes was ordered to bring his artillery to bear on it. Enghien took up his quarters for the night in one of the smaller redoubts, where the Bavarians had made a last stand ; it was a grim resting-place, but no better shelter was available. All the ridge was strewn with the dead, as well as with the wounded and dying, whom there were scanty means of caring for, and none of transporting elsewhere. Late in the evening the clouds which had shortened the daylight, broke overhead in torrents of rain. Further action was hardly possible before daylight. Chouppes went forward, under cover of night, to reconnoitre the surroundings of the fort, and found, to his astonishment, that the enemy had evacuated it, and drawn off towards headquarters. " I went immediately ", he says, " to tell M. le Duc. I found him in the redoubt with the Marshal de Guiche ; they were wrapped in their cloaks, and sleeping among the dead bodies ". The news gave so much pleasure to M. le Duc, that, rain and darkness notwithstanding, nothing would serve him but to set out there and then to inspect the fort, and see it occupied.

While the ' army of France ' slept, the ' army of Weimar ', a few miles away, kept up the engagement late into the night. Turenne had done his utmost. He had marched by roads hitherto considered impracticable, and he had engaged the enemy at five o'clock ; but he had not reached Uffhausen. The troops he found barring his way behind one of Mercy's improvised defences, were still some way from the far end of the pass. This first resistance was scattered, after a sharp fight. The Weimarians held on their march, though not without great danger and difficulty, delayed again and again by natural obstacles, and harassed by the enemy. Mercy had been warned of their approach ;

he looked on the Schönberg position as impregnable, and directed all the remaining strength of his force towards the ravine. Turenne, as he reached the farther end, found awaiting him four infantry battalions and the whole of the Bavarian cavalry, under a commander of European reputation whom the French called 'Jean de Wirth'.¹ For some hours the struggle raged hotly, scarcely checked by darkness, or by the storm of rain. Turenne had, if anything, gained ground; but he had by no means succeeded in disengaging all his troops from the pass. By midnight Mercy received word that the French troops had stormed the Schönberg successfully; he knew that he could not hope to bar the way much longer against Turenne, and that his only chance of escape lay in securing a new position during the next few hours. Orders were given for a retreat before daylight, and the movement was carried out with masterly promptness and discipline. Morning found the rear-guard of the 'army of Weimar' freed at last from the defile; and the Bavarians, two miles away, taking up their new post on the Josephsberg, a wooded height south-east of Fribourg, immediately overlooking the town.

August 4th dawned, wet, grey, and discouraging. Enghien came down into the plain to meet Turenne, under these depressing conditions, and together they reviewed the situation. Both Generals were equally determined on renewing the attack. Whether it would be expedient to make an attempt on the Josephsberg that same day, was another question. The weather was unfavourable; rain still fell heavily, and the ground in most places was little better than a swamp. The men were tired; Turenne's forces had scarcely rested during the night. After a short deliberation it was agreed to defer the action for twenty-four hours. The enemy, it was true, would also gain time, and Mercy would probably strengthen his defences; but even so, there was less chance of total failure than in leading an exhausted army, through a marsh, to the attack. All day the troops of France and Weimar stayed inactive in the plain; they had taken up their quarters in the deserted camp of the Bavarians at Uffhausen. On the road to Brisach, a long, slow file of carts and litters

¹ Correctly, Jan van Wert, a native of Gelderland, and a renowned soldier of fortune.

passed, carrying the wounded into the shelter of the town. Looking towards Fribourg, and the Josephsberg, the woods and vineyards of the slope hid some details of the enemy's position ; but its chief advantages were fairly clear. Mercy was occupying the open ground which forms the summit of the Josephsberg, a space so slightly inclined as to be almost a plateau, and large enough to hold several thousand men. On his left was the ruined tower of Wonnhalde, round which were concentrated four infantry battalions ; on his right rose another stronghold, the mound now known as ' Loretto '.¹ Along the edge of the plateau, and at intervals among the vineyards on the hillside, were ' abattis ', or barricades of fir-trees. Between the mountains and the town, the cavalry, under Jean de Wirth, guarded against any attempt to turn the position. No pass of any kind encircled the height ; to the south, an inaccessible mountain ridge connects the Josephsberg with the Schwarzberg, which towers behind it.

A direct frontal attack upon an enemy so placed, was not a measure to be lightly undertaken. The French Generals' only excuse against a charge of rashness must be that Mercy, though weakened by the actions of August 3rd, was far from being disabled. It was certain that he would neglect no opportunity if they were to show signs of retreat ; or, if they were to lead an army past him, turning into the Glotterthal with both flank and rear exposed. By the evening of the 4th, orders for the advance had been drawn up and issued. The attack on Wonnhalde was to be made by the Weimarian infantry under d'Aumont. The infantry of France, under Espenan, were to make a half turn to the left, so as to engage the enemy opposite Loretto. Espenan was supported by Mauvilly, and d'Aumont by a Weimarian officer, Taupadel,² each with a small body of cavalry. Between Loretto and Wonnhalde two or three battalions, detached from Espenan's infantry, were to make a ' holding ' attack for the sake of directing the enemy's attention to a third point. Guiche, with the main strength of the cavalry, was to

¹ A chapel, dedicated to Our Lady of Loretto, has since been built on this mound, in memory of those who fell in action on August 3 and 5, 1644.

² This name has proved a difficulty to French contemporary writers, who give it variously as ' Deubatel ', ' du Tubal ', and ' Teubatel '.

watch Jean de Wirth's movements in the plain. At daybreak on the 5th, the start was effected; "and as the sun rose", says Aymar de Choupes, "we found ourselves in presence of the enemy". Enghien had given instructions for the order of the separate attacks. Leschelle, with a battalion of musketeers, was at the head of d'Aumont's infantry. The ascent leading to Wonnhalde was the easiest approach; and he was therefore to wait until he heard, from the sound of firing, that Espenan's force had negotiated the steeper climb below Loretto, and given the signal to the smaller detachment half-way between them. By this means, the three attacks would be made almost simultaneously. During the advance, Enghien and Turenne together had gone forward to reconnoitre from a point towards the south, fully expecting to rejoin the troops before the time came for a general engagement. Suddenly, to their astonishment, the sound of firing made itself heard; a sound, not of scattered shots, but of a steady, continued fire. Almost at the same moment, a distracted messenger appeared, sent by the officers of the right, to summon M. le Duc. Espenan had achieved the greatest of his mistakes. Guiche, La Moussaye, Choupes, Turenne himself, agree in accusing him. Knowing, as he did, that Leschelle depended on his fire for a signal, he still thought it well to begin operations, not by scaling the height of Loretto, but by seizing a small redoubt near the foot of the ascent. Turenne, the greatest, and the least severe, of his critics, can find no better reason for such conduct than that "either he did not think the consequences could be so important, or he hoped to distinguish himself by this little independent action". The holders of the redoubt made a vigorous defence, and a brisk skirmish followed. Leschelle, hearing unmistakable sounds of battle, obeyed the call, and advanced instantly up the slope, thus making an attempt to storm the enemy's position single-handed. Enghien arrived at full speed, to find the whole plan of attack thrown into utter confusion; Leschelle killed, the musketeers scattered, and the foremost of d'Aumont's infantry driven down the hill, demoralised by a hot fire from the plateau. Turenne prepared to bring up the troops still in reserve. Enghien stayed to direct those already in action. It was still early when, with d'Aumont to second him, he

gathered the leading battalions together to renew the attack ; and throughout the whole of that fierce, interminable day, the French infantry was hurled relentlessly against the enemy's barricades ; beaten back time after time, only to be rallied desperately and led forward again. This was not a position which could be carried, like the Schönberg, by a rush ; Mercy's battalions held their ground, supported by his cavalry and artillery on the farther slope, next the town. Those who were actually sharing in the fight, and who recorded what they saw and heard, have left no very lucid survey of the action as a whole ; their experiences are too strictly personal. But not one fails in giving the impression of sustained and pitiless effort ; of turmoil, and fury, under an August sun, among vines, and thick branches, and obstacles without number. Above all, they call to mind the figure of M. le Duc, whose courage was only heightened by danger, and who seemed to bear a charmed life, for he was most of the day on horseback within thirty paces of the enemy.¹ The attack on Wonnhalde lasted six or seven hours. Guiche, all the while stationed in the plain, could see the conflict growing more and more furious ; and, as he says, " concluded beyond doubt that the Duc d'Enghien was engaged in the midst of it ". The certainty was too strong for Guiche, who looked on his young General as being more or less in his charge ; he left his own command to Palluau and hastened off towards the slope. As he went, he was met by a train of the wounded, who were being brought down the hill ; they told him " that the Duc d'Enghien was at the head of the infantry, and was leading them in person, under the hottest of the fire ".² Guiche quickened his pace, and had reached the edge of the vineyard when his horse was hit by a stray shot and fell with him. As he rose to his feet, he saw Enghien coming down from the attack ; " having only a few of his own men with him, for the rest had been killed at his side ". One of his companions was Espenan, who, if he could not atone for his fault, seems at least to have fought with great courage during the rest of the day. As for the Duke, part of his saddle had been carried away by grapeshot ; and more than one musket-ball

¹ *Relation de La Moussaye.*

² *Maréchal-Duc de Gramont, Mémoires.*

had grazed his clothing. He was far too much excited to be in the smallest degree conscious of fatigue or danger ; his one idea was to renew the attempt instantly from a different point. Fresh battalions were brought up, and an attack organised, this time to be led by Mauvilly, against the great barricade before Loretto ; Wonnhalde could not be forced at the same time, but Turenne was to keep the enemy occupied there, as long as possible. The fight raged again, more savagely than ever. Behind their defences the Bavarians had been strengthened from an unexpected source. Gaspard de Mercy, brother of the General, was second in command of the cavalry ; he ordered his horsemen to dismount, and led them up the farther hillside, to join the troops on the plateau. The fire from the barricades was overpowering ; yet still the attacking force came up within such close range that pistol-shots were exchanged between the branches of the abattis. Mauvilly was killed, and his place taken by Castelnau, who, though wounded, held it for the rest of the day. The losses were heavy on the Bavarian side ; Gaspard de Mercy was among the dead ; but the French infantry suffered more, and it is especially noted that the number of officers and 'volontaires' who fell, exceeded all proportion. Fribourg, with its vineyards, may surely claim a share of that loveliness which the German folk-song gives to another city :

" du wunderschöne Stadt !
Darinnen liegt begraben so manniger Soldat.
So mancher, so schöner, so braver Soldat ".

Evening closed on the terrible scene described by Guiche and by La Moussaye ; the French soldiers, with scarcely an officer left to direct them, unnerved by long hours of exposure, and afraid to draw back across the open, seeking desperately for cover ; some even sheltering against the barricade itself.¹ La Moussaye adds that " in the smoke and confusion, the men's faces could only be distinguished by their match-lights. The noise of firing re-echoed through the woods with a fearful sound, increasing the horrors of the fight ".

At length, almost at nightfall, Enghien allowed

¹ " Ce qui restoit d'infanterie tâchoit de mettre à l'abri en se collant le plus qu'elle pouvait contre l'abatis d'arbres que les ennemis avoient faite".
—*Mémoires* du Maréchal-Duc de Gramont.

the question of retreat to be considered. So long as a chance remained of the enemy sallying out for a counter-attack, he had refused to think for a moment of giving way. Turenne was equally resolute, and sent several messages to M. le Duc during the day, saying that, come what might, he would try to hold on till evening.¹ Mercy's losses, however, had been not much less than their own; even without the darkness, he would scarcely have ventured on an offensive movement; and, as Guiche observed, it would be sheer cruelty, on the French side, to sacrifice the remaining infantry, who were no longer even fighting in self-defence. Orders were given for the shattered remnants of d'Aumont's and Espenan's battalions to draw off to Uffhausen. The French admitted no defeat, in spite of their failure to carry the position. They had disabled Mercy from following them; their forces withdrew in good order, bringing off the wounded; and not a single piece of artillery was left in the enemy's hands. Their losses had been fearful; "their blood was shed like water, on every side"; but 'les armes de Sa Majesté' were in no way disgraced.

For the three next succeeding days the armies rested; each was too utterly exhausted to make any movement, either of attack or retreat. It was a ghastly interval, and one spoken of afterwards with more horror than the fight itself. The heat was stifling in the enclosed plain; and around both camps the dead lay thickly. The total number of killed on both sides during the two days' conflict amounted to nearly nine thousand; the Bavarians had lost more heavily on the first day, and the French on the second. Mercy reports to the Elector of Bavaria that "according to the statements made by our prisoners, the enemy's loss (on August 5th) may be counted by thousands". Enghien's account to Mazarin, is that "if the Bavarian forces are not entirely destroyed, at least they are so much damaged that they cannot recover themselves for some time. As for ourselves, we have certainly lost great numbers; but not to compare with the enemy; the loss has fallen more on the officers than on the men, and it is impossible to say what zeal and courage was shown by them all". Even Espenan comes in, among several others, for a word of praise;

¹ Turenne, *Mémoires*.

M. le Duc could be very indulgent to faults which sprang from over-eagerness. "Poor Mauvilly", he says, "had won the greatest honour in the hour of his death". La Moussaye "had three horses killed under him, and was hit by a musket-ball in the arm". "M. le Maréchal de Turenne served with all the courage and capacity imaginable".¹ "All our troops did well, and I assure you no army was every nearer destruction than that of the enemy". Some degree of failure is acknowledged, in a spirit of piety, not too submissive: "Dieu ne l'a pas voulu; nous en retrouverons peut-être l'occasion".²

Every objection to Erlach's original design of an advance through the Glotterthal had now been removed. To stay longer before Fribourg, in that place of death, was impossible; already there was much illness in the camp. The enemy fared worse, if anything, from being encamped in a more confined space; they were short of provisions and of forage, and it was evident that Mercy must withdraw from his present position without delay. His natural, and almost inevitable, line of retreat was through a narrow pass, the St. Petersthal, which opened southwards among the mountains to his rear, leading first to the Abbey of St. Peter, and thence through the Black Forest to the safe territory of Wurtemberg. Below the rock on which the Abbey stands, the Glotterthal joins the St. Petersthal, forming, as it were, the point of a V; and here the French Generals hoped to intercept his march. Mercy had been so far worsted that his chief anxiety was to escape without being forced to defend himself a third time; his plans were skilfully laid, and, in the end, he came very near in achieving his object.

Before sunrise on August 9th, the French army, with the Weimarians forming an advance guard, was advancing towards Denzlingen, a small town at the mouth of the Glotterthal. At the head of all, Reinhold von Rosen, with eight hundred horsemen, and Castelnau with the musketeers, were to push on and delay the enemy, if necessary, till the rest could come up. Mercy lost not an instant. At the first sign of movement

¹ Turenne returns the compliment in a letter to his sister written the same day (August 8): "M. le Duc d'Enghien is as determined, and as capable, as it is possible to be".

² A.C., August 8, 1644.

in the French camp, he gave orders for his troops to take the road through the St. Petersthal; he had reached the point where the valleys join on the morning of the 10th, and his rear-guard, with the artillery and baggage, was in the act of passing the Abbey of St. Peter when Rosen's cavalry were sighted emerging from the Glotterthal. Rosen forthwith engaged the enemy's infantry, commanded by Mercy in person, which had faced about to receive him. Each side was at some disadvantage; Rosen, as he stood, was greatly outnumbered, and his squadrons, issuing from the pass, were obliged to form up under the Bavarian's fire. Mercy, on the other hand, could not drive the Weimarian cavalry back into the defile, for fear of finding himself engaged with the main strength of Enghien's force. The skirmish lasted two hours. By the end of that time, Mercy had secured a temporary advantage. Without staying to press it further, he turned and continued his retreat in haste; for the French troops could be heard coming on through the defile. All his baggage and several pieces of artillery were left behind. Enghien sent pressing orders to his advance guard, who quickened their pace; but in vain. The Bavarians had gained a start, and had used it to such purpose that there was little hope of overtaking them. Some attempt at pursuit was kept up as far as the plateau of Hohlgraben, where it was expected the enemy would camp for the night; but though traces of preparation were found, Mercy had not stayed his march. For twenty leagues he scarcely halted; his next camp was at Schömberg, in Wurtemberg; and four days later he was safe in the Franconian town of Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber.

The French troops returned, at a more leisurely pace, from Hohlgraben to St. Peter on the evening of August 10th. If Mercy had outstripped them, there was at least some consolation in the thought that his retreat had been not unlike a flight. To leave baggage and artillery to their fate, in the fear of pursuit, was, to some extent, a confession of defeat. It was no wonder that the enemy's belongings were pillaged "by order, and with great satisfaction".¹ Enghien repeats joyfully that "though the army escaped, the troops were in strange disorder, and will not soon

¹ Maréchal-Duc de Gramont, *Mémoires*.

recover themselves ". This last statement was undeniable. Mercy's force might, for the moment, be discounted, and he had left the ground clear. " We are just about to consider our next undertaking ", Enghien continues his report to the Cardinal, " and in a day or two I will inform you of it, that we may hear your decision ".¹ He asks urgently for a reinforcement of infantry, to repair the losses of August 5th. Mazarin was not unwilling to supply the troops ; but he feared the well-known dislike to service in Germany, and would not dispatch them without some delay and many precautions. Even the officers, apparently, were not to be told of their true destination until after they had started. Enghien, judging by his own experience, thought so much mystery superfluous : " I never found any concealment necessary ", he says, " over our march into Germany. I told everyone of it myself, so that the officers might make up their minds to it with a good grace, and set their men a cheerful example. I do assure you it answered better than if I had cheated them ".² Henri de Bourbon meanwhile sends a warning that assistance must not be too much depended on, for the troops that have been chosen are " newly raised, and very indifferent ". As a matter of fact, nearly a month passed before they succeeded in reaching the frontier ; by which time the campaign was almost at an end. Enghien seems to have been prepared for this contingency from the first ; but his designs were none the less on a larger scale than the Government had foreseen, or, indeed, than public opinion was inclined to approve. The French army had forced Mercy off the field, chiefly, it was supposed, as a preliminary to retaking Fribourg. Now, as it appeared, M. le Duc intended to relinquish this idea entirely, and was bent, instead, on the conquest of the Rhine. Fribourg had a peculiar value in the eyes of France ; it was one of the farthest points which had been captured within the enemy's territory, and to preserve it was looked on rather as a point of honour. Letters from Paris, both private and official, show that the acquisition of Fribourg was expected as a right ; and one of them, written by the Regent, in

¹ MS. in a private collection.

² To Mazarin, from a private collection ; see Duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*.

the King's name, amounts almost to a Royal command. True, there were exceptions; Madame la Princesse asks no further conquests of any kind; nothing but her son's health and safety:

"I am in such constant terrors that I cannot rest, night or day; you have forgotten your promise that you would take care of yourself, for love of me, since I have no joy or pleasure in life but through you; be careful, my dear child, if you love me, and believe that I love you more than my life".¹

M. le Duc's own personal friends, the 'petits-mâîtres', are only loud in their joy over Mercy's losses and retreat, mingled with regrets at not having shared in so delightful an occasion. Thus, François de Montmorency, Comte de Boutteville,² then a precocious boy of seventeen, writes: "I know how much your Highness dislikes compliments; but though you beat me for it, as if I were a Bavarian army, I must still tell you that the glory of your victory is so vast, and so all-sufficing, that it would crown all our Marshals of France, and a million of Princes,—from whom may God deliver us!—and there would still be enough left for an honest man. The death of Madame de la Marck, and the business which came on me through the succession, took from me the honour of following you to Germany; I can only console myself by seeing your safe return to Paris, which I own I await with the greatest impatience, though I am assured that your Highness has a legion of 'angels' for your protection. I will leave those who are better informed than I am to give you news on this subject. All I know is, that Mesdemoiselles de Rambouillet and de Boutteville said their prayers yesterday with such fervour, that they could scarcely be withdrawn from their ecstasy".³

Other congratulations were not wanting, for Mercy and his Bavarians had long been the scourge of the frontier. But when the Duke's further intentions became generally known, they were met on all sides by a chorus of disapproval. Even in his own council he had, at first, no small opposition to contend with. After the shattering experiences of the past

¹ A.C., August 16, 1644.

² Afterwards Maréchal-Duc de Luxembourg.

³ A.C., 1644.

few days, it was something of a shock to the French and Weimarian officers, to hear that their next enterprise would be the siege of Philippsbourg, sixty leagues away, and that not a moment was to be lost in taking the road. Enghien would hear of no alternative. Fribourg would have been an easy and well-sounding conquest ; but its position, overlooked by the French garrison of Brisach, was not, strategically, of the first importance ; and at best, the place could have been only an isolated possession. Now, before Mercy could recover his forces, was the moment for securing the actual Rhine towns : Philippsbourg, Spires, Worms, Mannheim, and the command of all the river down to Mayence. " My plan ", he said, " is to send the artillery, the provisions, and the siege implements, down the Rhine from Brisach ; the commissariat officers will go to Strasbourg and buy flour for the bread ; the baggage and artillery which we left at Metz will set out at once to join us ; and I shall take the troops, as fast as they can go, towards Philippsbourg ; so that all the necessaries for the siege may arrive there at the same time ". The money for the siege expenses should be borrowed in Strasbourg in his own name ; and as for the lack of infantry, " the courage of those who were left, must make up for what was wanting in numbers ". Before this frame of mind objections melted away. M. le Duc's determination and resource were, by themselves, quite sufficiently compelling ; and when, in addition, he exerted himself to put forth all his powers of pleasing, the result was irresistible. The forced marches to Philippsbourg were long and trying ; but " the cheerfulness of the General officers, and the kindness and condescension of the Duke to officers and men alike, smoothed away all difficulties ".¹

Turenne also witnesses to a state of complete harmony : " M. d'Enghien could not possibly make himself more acceptable to me, and I have no difficulties with M. le Maréchal de Guiche ; there have been no (personal) disagreements, and we are all good friends ".²

The French army reached Philippsbourg on August 25th, some time before the Court had recovered from the annoyance of hearing that Fribourg was abandoned. Henri de Bourbon bewails his son's

¹ Maréchal-Duc de Gramont, *Mémoires*.

² Turenne to his sister, August 12, 1644.

ambition, much as he had done before the siege of Thionville; he dwells on the 'fâcherie non-pareille' which has been caused, and also on his own displeasure at such rashness, "when there were sure means of maintaining a great reputation, without risk".¹ This mental attitude continued for a fortnight; at the end of which time news arrived that the first step of Enghien's design had been accomplished. Philippsbourg, taken unawares, had surrendered after a twelve days' siege. The effect on the Rhenish towns farther north surpassed all expectation. The municipal authorities at Spire and at Worms wrote, tendering their submission to the Duke, and asking the protection of the French Government in the future. Enghien stayed for a few days in Philippsbourg, superintending the repair of the fortifications, while Turenne and d'Aumont reduced two or three smaller fortresses, and occupied the garrisons of their new dependencies. On September 17th the burghers of Mayence threw open their gates without resistance, and the Dean and Chapter of the Cathedral came out to present M. le Duc with the keys of the town. "I am rejoiced beyond expression by your miraculous victories", wrote the Prince, with an abrupt change of tone, finding himself overwhelmed by congratulations from all parties. The last achievement of the campaign was the taking of Landau, a stronghold of Duke Charles of Lorraine, and the connecting link between Philippsbourg and Metz. Landau surrendered to Turenne on September 26th. The garrison left by Duke Charles was less easily overcome than some of the neighbouring forces, and its defence cost the life of d'Aumont. Tournon, 'the last hope of a noble family', had fallen at Philippsbourg, after escaping countless dangers during the two days of Fribourg; otherwise, these later conquests had brought few losses. D'Aumont had done good service, and he died as became a 'gentilhomme de haut lieu'. "I have visited M. d'Aumont", Turenne writes to the Duke from Landau, "and found him with a countenance as calm and determined as ever. He has a surgeon with him, who declares that the thigh-bone is not broken; but he himself feels sure that it is". The doctors, Turenne adds, think badly of the wound; but "I have never seen anyone show greater firmness or composure. He

¹ A.C., August 27, 1644.

spoke to me of the pay that was owing to him, but only to ask that the Queen might give it to his wife".¹

Turenne, with 'the army of Weimar' and the reinforcements which had at last arrived, established his headquarters at Spires for the winter. Enghien and the 'army of France', whose expedition to the Rhine had drawn them from their lawful territory in Champagne, recrossed the frontier. The campaigning season was over. M. le Duc lost no time in returning to Court; "where", says an appreciative chronicler, "the Queen prepared for him the most agreeable entertainments, and all the recreations he deserved, after so much fatigue and exertion".

¹ *A.C.*, September 25, 1644.

CHAPTER VI

THE 'ANGELS' OF CHANTILLY

1644-1645

THE Court of the Regency was never gayer, or more brilliant, than during the winter which followed the Fribourg campaign. The armies of France had been everywhere successful; in Flanders as well as on the Rhine. Even Gravelines had surrendered in the end; and now, who so triumphant as Monsieur? Courtiers ranked him and Enghien together as 'the two conquerors'; while his daughter, 'la Grande Mademoiselle', shows in her memoirs the most unmistakable joy and relief at his appearing, for once, in such a creditable light: "The news of the surrender gave me inexpressible pleasure, for I always had the greatest affection for Monsieur, even when I did not think he was treating me well". Enghien, if not flattered, was at least indifferent to hearing his name coupled with Monsieur's. His own military reputation, he knew, was safe with all those whose opinion he valued; and he allowed the complacency of the House of Orleans on that head to rest undisturbed. His relations with Monsieur were naïvely said to be "as friendly as was possible between Princes who made no pretensions to sincerity",¹ and the whole state of Court politics seemed to promise conditions of most unwonted peacefulness.

Enghien found the Queen-Regent and the little King spending the autumn at Fontainebleau; he stayed just long enough to pay his respects in due form, and then hastened to Chantilly, where the whole coterie were awaiting him. Here, the surroundings were nothing short of ideal, to a young man of his tastes and disposition, returning from a strenuous campaign. The writers of the time vie with each other in dwelling on

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

the enchantments of Chantilly, when Madame la Princesse was its châtelaine.¹ Even at the present day, in spite of the years and changes that have passed over it, some idea may be gained of the charm of this castle, set among woods and waters, in its golden age. "The Court of Chantilly", it was said, "might yield in numbers to the Court of Fontainebleau, but not in pleasures or in gallantry". "Besides the natural beauty of the place, there were games, walks, music, hunting, and everything that could make time pass delightfully".² Acting was a popular amusement, and in the warmer months, plays and ballets were given in the gardens in the open air. Sometimes the entertainments were held at Chantilly, and sometimes at Liancourt, a few miles distant, where the hostess, Jeanne de Schomberg, Duchesse de Liancourt, was one of the Princess's most intimate friends. Enghien himself has helped to describe some favourite occupations, in a rhyming letter, written by him, and others of the 'damoiseaux', to two unfortunate companions, whose duties called them elsewhere. The letter has many stanzas, of which a few will suffice :

" Dans un lieu, le plus beau qui soit au Monde,
 Où tout plaisir abonde,
 Où la nature et l'art, étalant leurs beautés,
 Font nos félicités ;
 Une troupe sans pair de jeunes demoiselles,
 Vertueuses et belles,
 A pour son entretien cent jeunes damoiseaux,
 Sages, adroits et beaux.
 Chacun fait à l'envie briller sa gentillesse,
 Sa grâce, et son adresse,
 Et force son esprit pour plaire à la beauté
 Dont il est arrêté".³

The 'comédies', 'sérénades', and 'mascarades' are mentioned, and also the pleasures of sport :

" Les dames bien souvent, aux plus belles journées
 Montent des haquenées ;
 On vole la perdrix,⁴ ou l'on chasse le loup,
 En allant à Merlou.⁵

¹ Chantilly was originally a possession of the Montmorency family, and passed, through Mme La Princesse (Charlotte de Montmorency), to the Princes of Condé. During her lifetime it was looked on as peculiarly her property.

² Histoire Manuscrite de la Régence d'Anne d'Autriche, Bibl. Nat.

³ MSS. de Conrart, Bibl. de l'Arsenal.

⁴ Hawking for partridges.

⁵ Merlou or Mello, a smaller estate of the Condé family, not far from Chantilly.

Les amants à côté leur disent à l'oreille :
O divine Merveille !

Laissez les animaux, puis-que vos yeux vainqueurs
Prennent assez de cœurs ”.

This passion for verse-making amounted almost to a mania among members of the clique; games and letters encouraged it till it seems possible to wonder if they even spoke in prose. Their efforts are quite unpretentious, and evidently not intended for serious criticism; it was simply the custom for anyone who had five minutes to spare, to use it in stringing lines together. M. le Duc was as much a victim to the fashion as any of his friends. One All Saints' Day, on arriving at Liancourt, where several of the 'angels' were assembled, he found, somewhat to his annoyance, that instead of staying to receive him, they had all gone to hear Mass. But the universal habit came to his aid; and his revenge took the form of a verse, which he improvised as he waited :

“ Donnez-en à garder à d'autres,
Dites cent fois vos patenôtres,
Et marmottez-en ce saint jour.
Nous vous estimons trop habiles ;
Pour ouïr des propos d'amour
Vous quitteriez bientôt vigiles ”.¹

Among the *Archives of Chantilly* are other examples of the craze for composition. A letter addressed to the Comte de Toulangeon consists of 'sentiments' written, in French or in Latin, by eight different hands, each contribution bearing the author's signature. Madame de Longueville leads the way :

“ Incipiam primis ludere carminibus ”.

ANNE DE BOURBON.²

Madame la Princesse stands next, and, strange to relate, expresses herself in prose. Then follow 'Marie d'Orléans',³ stepdaughter of the Duchesse de Longueville; 'Julie d'Angennes',⁴ otherwise Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, and her future husband, the Duc de

¹ MSS. Conrart, Bibl. de l'Arsenal.

² It was the custom for ladies to sign by their own family name, even after marriage.

³ Afterwards married to Henri de Savoie, Duc de Nemours.

⁴ The daughter of a noble house usually signed by her family name; though she was known in society by a name taken from one of her father's titles.

Montausier; Marthe du Vigean; Enghien, and La Moussaye; all of whom launch out into verse, as a matter of course. M. le Duc's couplet refers to Toulangeon's nickname,—'Prince d'Amour':

"Enfin vous l'emportez, et la faveur d'un roy
Vous élève en un rang qui n'étoit dû qu'à moy".
LOUIS DE BOURBON.

Poetry of a more serious kind also played an important part; classics were read and discussed; and it was often told how M. le Duc, for all his cynicism, had been moved to tears by a representation of Corneille's 'Cinna'. Campaigning had not lessened Enghien's literary inclinations; the impetus which his education at Bourges had given to a strong natural instinct never died away. All his life he was an insatiable reader; even in camp he read, usually for two or three hours, before going to sleep. The influence of the Hôtel de Rambouillet was all-pervading at Chantilly, and many topics of discourse bear plainly the mark of the 'précieuse', just then in her glory, and still untouched by satire. M. le Duc and his companions-in-arms,—Nemours,¹ Chabot, Coligny, and La Moussaye,—must be pictured as joining Madame la Longueville and her friends in conversation 'on the delicacy of the sentiments and the emotions'; making 'subtle distinctions' in a manner described as 'galante et enjouée'. Enghien, it is true, was not always to be trusted on these occasions. He was quick enough to catch the jargon of the 'précieuses' and to use it, now and then, with effect; but it may be gathered that, though much might be allowed to a Prince, his tone was often too flippant and unrestrained not to shock some of the company.

However much M. le Duc might be lacking in sensibility, his nature was far too highly strung not to have an emotional side; and all the emotion of which he was capable, at that moment, was concentrated in his attachment to Marthe du Vigean. Nothing could be more characteristic of the time than the undisguised public sympathy and interest with which this affair was regarded. Popular opinion was not concerned with the possibilities of a 'démariage', which had only been discussed in the most intimate circles. It was enough

¹ Charles-Amédée de Savoie, Duc de Nemours; born 1622; succeeded his brother, who died at the siege of Aire, 1641.

that here were the makings of an unusually exciting and romantic intrigue. M. le Duc, the hero of Rocroy and Fribourg, had fallen in love, desperately, as became a hero, with one of the most beautiful women of the day. The Court poets encouraged him openly :

“Enghien, délices de la Cour,
Sur ton chef éclatant de gloire,
Viens mêler le myrte d'Amour
A la palme de la Victoire”.

One writer, whose praise of Chantilly has already been quoted, concludes his description by saying : “The younger du Vigean was there, for whom the Duc d'Enghien showed great friendship and tenderness ; she, on her side, gave him some encouragement, and everyone favoured them”.¹ Everyone, that is to say, at Chantilly. The indulgent views of society were not shared, for various reasons, by three spectators, whose opinion was of the first importance ; namely, the Queen, Mazarin, and Henri de Bourbon. Any real prospect of the Duke's marriage being annulled, was as remote as ever ; Marthe continued true to her principles ; and the whole situation had practically arrived at a deadlock.

Enghien was not the only one of the ‘ damoiseaux ’ who was conducting a love-affair under difficulties. During the winter of 1644-45, a nine days' wonder was brought about by the elopement of Gaspard de Coligny and Isabelle de Montmorency-Boutteville ; M. le Duc, to whom Coligny had turned for support in this act of defiance to his family, being the protector, if not the instigator, of the scheme. Coligny, known also as the Comte de Châtillon, was the younger son of the Duc de Châtillon, a leader of the Huguenot party. The tragic death of his brother Maurice, who fell in a duel by the hand of the Duc de Guise, had made him heir to immense family possessions, and a marriage had at once been suggested for him with a Huguenot heiress, Mademoiselle de la Force.² Coligny refused to hear of any such arrangement. He had already abjured the Huguenot faith, partly, if not wholly, to recommend himself to Mademoiselle de Boutteville,

¹ Histoire Manuscrite, Bibl. Nat.

² Charlotte de Caumont de la Force, Dame de Saveilles ; afterwards the wife of Turenne.

who, though undeniably beautiful and of good family, was almost portionless, and had been brought up an enemy of 'la religion prétendue réformée'. 'La belle Boutteville' was just eighteen at the time of the crisis, and had already some years' experience as a reigning beauty. Coligny was the most brilliant and attractive of her suitors; he had distinguished himself conspicuously in action; Enghien's friendship made him sure of advancement; and a great position would be his by inheritance. In addition, his friend Chavagnac records that this well-appointed hero of romance was 'tall, straight, and well-made', with 'large dark eyes, and an agreeable wit in conversation'; a combination of gifts which made him seem 'the most accomplished nobleman in France'. Notwithstanding all these qualifications, Madame de Boutteville, the mother of Isabelle, was scarcely less opposed to the marriage than the old Duc de Châtillon. Her first objections had been that Coligny was a Huguenot, and a younger son; and when both these obstacles had been removed, she was so much insulted by the attitude of his relations, that she refused, on her side, to give any consent. "No daughter of the House of Montmorency", she declared, "had ever married any man against the wishes of his family". Coligny was banished, by parental authority, to Holland, on a pretext of military service; and was thereby prevented from sharing in the Fribourg campaign. He writes lamentably to Enghien that he is undergoing 'the harshest penance in the world'; and after a few months his endurance failed altogether; he returned to France, with or without permission. To have been cheated of a share in the glory of Fribourg was a terrible addition to his grievances; he writes again, to assure 'Monseigneur et mon maistre' that he would gladly have lost his life in the fight, simply for the pleasure of being present; and from all that is known of Coligny, there seems no reason to suppose that he was speaking other than the literal truth. M. le Duc arrived at Chantilly, after his campaign, very much in love himself, and very ready to help his friend. It is asserted, chiefly on the authority of Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, that Isabelle de Montmorency had once been a possible rival to Marthe du Vigean, and that Enghien's eagerness to help on the marriage with Coligny was partly to prove his present

devotion to Marthe. A rumour which might have been even more effectual, was that the families of du Vigean and Coligny were now negotiating a marriage between Marthe and Gaspard ; the suggestion " gave as much alarm to the Duke as he himself gave to the enemies of the State ". For the story of the actual elopement, Madame de Motteville's account may be closely followed. " The two lovers having done everything in their power to surmount the obstacles to their happiness, resolved at last to take the only course that remained to them ; one in which they were assured of the support of the Duc d'Enghien, their protector and confidant ". Their plans were duly laid. Isabelle was staying in Paris at the house of her elder sister, the Duchesse de Valançay. As they were returning home one evening, the Duchess " was astonished to see an armed band at her door, who seized Mademoiselle de Boutteville and carried her away "—to where Coligny was waiting, at a little distance, with a coach and six horses for their journey. Isabelle " pretended to cry out for help, so as to hide the consent she had given " ; some of Madame de Valançay's servants tried to interfere, and the porter, or Suisse, was killed ; " paying with his life for these lamentations, which were the least sad ever uttered ". The fugitives travelled all night ; once outside Paris, they left their carriage and made the rest of the journey on horseback. They were married in public next morning at Châteaux-Thierry,¹ and Enghien provided them with a lodging on the borders of his own Champagne territory, at Stenay. Madame de Motteville gives no details of the marriage ceremony, but passes on to the scene witnessed by her in the Queen's apartments on the night of the elopement, which was, as she says, ' une plaisante comédie '. " The Queen was just retiring to bed when word was brought that Madame la Princesse was asking for an audience in one of her private rooms. She was a good deal surprised, for it was past midnight, and no time for such visits ; however, she gave orders for her admittance, and waited in some curiosity ".

Madame la Princesse came before the Queen, who was in the act of arranging her hair for the night, and

¹ " J'ai procédé ce matin au saint sacrement de mariage en présence de tout Château-Thierry ". Gaspard de Coligny to M. le Duc., *A.C.*, 1645.

exclaimed in pathetic tones : " Madame, here is an unhappy woman "—presenting Madame de Boutteville—" who is in great grief at the misfortune which has befallen her. She has come to ask for justice against the Comte de Châtillon, who has robbed her of her daughter ".

Madame de Boutteville flung herself at the Queen's feet ; she was all dishevelled, her lace and her clothes were torn. " She wept aloud, as though the Comte de Châtillon had been a highwayman, and had done her daughter every wrong " ; and dwelt, further, at great length on what Isabelle's horror would be at finding herself in the power of a man " whom she had never dared so much as to look at, without her mother's consent ", and " whom she would never be able to think of henceforward, except as a tyrant ". The Queen, naturally enough, found it hard to believe that two young people in their position, who met very often, and whose friendship was of many years' standing, had not been acting on a concerted plan. She gave some consoling answer to Madame de Boutteville, and then, drawing Madame la Princesse aside, said to her : " Ma cousine, I think I need be in no great hurry to punish the criminal. I do not suppose that Mademoiselle de Boutteville would thank us for interfering with her happiness, or that Madame de Boutteville would wish to see M. de Châtillon, except as her son-in-law ". The Princess, who had heard the truth, but who, herself a Montmorency, had not been able to refuse to bring her kinswoman before the Queen, turned her face to the wall to hide a laugh. " For Heaven's sake, Madame ", she said, " do not make a ridiculous figure of me, before them all ! My wicked son managed the whole affair ; everyone is delighted ; and that poor woman's tears can only move me to laughter, though I would not make fun of her openly. They did their plotting without me, and now I have the trouble of it ". Thereupon both Queen and Princess did their best to comfort Madame de Boutteville without accusing her daughter. They had only partially succeeded when another petitioner arrived, still more distracted : the Comte de Brion, a cousin, and a fervent admirer of Isabelle. He accused Coligny no less vehemently, demanding that an armed force should be sent in pursuit ; and the Queen was

obliged to tell him plainly,—out of Madame de Boutteville's hearing,—that she thought his cousin had no wish to be rescued. It was almost morning before the Queen's apartments could be cleared ; and meanwhile the culprits were far on their way, beyond reach of pursuit. In the end, as might have been expected, the parents gave way ; though not till after a fitting display of indignation. Their forgiveness was subject to certain conditions ; Coligny and his bride were forced to submit to a second marriage, since the first had taken place without parental consent, when the bridegroom was still under twenty-five ;¹ but before many months had passed, they were fully re-established in favour. The ballad-mongers of the Court and of the town did not neglect their opportunity, and advised all lovers to follow Coligny's example. "*Il n'y a rien tel que d'enlever*" was the refrain used by Sarrasin, one of the Chantilly poets. The romantic element, unfortunately, was short-lived ; Madame de Motteville says with justice, that "the scandal of the elopement was a fit prelude to the unhappiness of the marriage". Still, whatever its drawbacks, Madame de Châtillon could scarcely have arranged a more appropriate opening to her eventful career.

Long before this disturbance, the brief tranquillity of the Court had been rudely shaken. The truce between the Houses of Orleans and Condé lasted, at most, three or four weeks, and was followed by a violent quarrel, in which M. le Duc and Mademoiselle de Montpensier took the leading parts. 'La Grande Mademoiselle', first Enghien's enemy, and later one of the staunchest of his allies, was now seventeen years old ; and for nearly as many years had been firmly convinced of her own importance. It need scarcely be said that the question at issue was a point of precedence. The occasion was a Requiem Mass, sung in Notre-Dame for the Queen of Spain (Isabelle of France) and attended in state by Princes and Princesses of the Blood ; when Enghien, by appointing two pages, instead of one, to carry his wife's train, tacitly claimed equality with

¹ " Je crois que vous sèris bien ayse d'aprandre que le mariage de M. de Coligny a été confirmé avec toutes les formalités nésésères ; M. Vostre père a bien voulu siner au contrat, nous y avons tous siné ; j'ay ausi été au mariage qui a été fect dans l'archevêche, par M. l'archevêque de Paris ". Madame la Princesse to M. le Duc, *A.C.*, June 19, 1645.

Mademoiselle, granddaughter of a King. Mademoiselle wept with indignation ; but the Queen, from whom she eagerly sought redress, lost patience, and rebuked her sharply for her want of self-control. The Princess, in her writings, makes no more secret of her early dislike to M. le Duc than of her subsequent admiration for him. He had impeached her Royal prerogatives in public, and she more than suspected him of laughing at her in private. Her aversion, she says, was so powerful, that she took no pleasure in any victory gained by him ; and when a rumour was circulated of his having been wounded, she " heard the news with joy, and hoped that he might be disfigured ". This frankness of speech extended to all her dealings ; it was as natural to ' la Grande Mademoiselle ' as it would have been impossible to most of her family. Her mind was not subtle ; she could never have discussed ' the delicacy of the emotions ' with any acuteness ; but her staunchness, her honesty, and a certain practical shrewdness were soon to make her a valuable political ally. She was a favourite with the people of Paris, and her popularity among them proved another useful asset ; they admired her high spirits and her unmistakable Bourbon cast of countenance :

" Cette grande et haute pucelle,
Que l'on nomme Mademoiselle ;
Dont en tout temps le cœur est gai
Comme l'on est au mois de Mai ".¹

For the present, Mademoiselle gave little thought to politics ; she loved dancing and amusements, and hoped, more or less vaguely, some day to marry a King. She attempted, loyally, the impossible task of respecting her father, and as a rule his enemies were hers ; but it was for strictly personal reasons that she hated the whole House of Condé in general, and M. le Duc in particular. No doubt she was partly consoled for her injuries when Enghien, not long after the ceremony of the Requiem, put himself thoroughly in the wrong by causing a great commotion at the Palais du Luxembourg, where Monsieur was giving a dramatic entertainment, followed by a ball. While the dessert and ' confitures ' were being handed to the ladies, a seneschal, or ' exempt ', who was directing the pro-

¹ Loret, *La Muse Historique*.

ceedings, passed so near M. le Duc as to catch the wand of office in his hair. Perhaps the accident was not easy to avoid ; for the Duke's hair, as his portraits bear witness, stood out from his head, thick, curling, and unmanageable. Be that as it might, for a servant to touch it carelessly was an impertinence not to be borne. Enghien seized the wand, broke it in two, and beat the seneschal with the pieces. That a Prince should chastise his own, or other people's, servants, even in public, was nothing unusual ; but that he should do so in the presence of a greater Prince, a 'son of France', was a grave breach of etiquette. Enghien was judiciously persuaded into apologising ; and next day, Mazarin and the Duc de Longueville conducted him to the Luxembourg Palace, where Monsieur received his excuses, and his assurance that 'he had acted without thinking'. Gaston d'Orléans was of a more placable disposition than his daughter ; not from any moral superiority, but simply because, Bourbon though he was, his nature was too indolent to allow him even to stand on his dignity, unless the idea was first suggested to him. Mademoiselle, on the other hand, felt something, at least, of the greatness of her position, and tried honestly, according to her lights, to live up to it.

As the spring advanced it became gradually evident that, in the coming season, Enghien was destined to make another German campaign. The 'army of the Rhine' had passed a trying winter. "The enemy have given us a bad three months", Turenne writes from Kreuznach on December 27th. The Imperial forces had recovered their strength. Mercy and the Duke of Lorraine were harassing him, and his own troops, the Weimarians, were growing discontented ; not without reason, in their General's opinion. "I must own", he says, "that there are no troops but these who would have maintained themselves for so long without receiving a single halfpenny of their pay". Monsieur, encouraged by success, was again preparing to command the forces in Flanders. Enghien was to resume his post with the 'army of Champagne' ; and as early as March, 1645, he made a brief expedition into his territory to investigate the state of his own forces. Finding their numbers very deficient, he returned as soon as possible to Paris, and, during the next six weeks, did all that he could to persuade Mazarin into allowing him reinforcements.

The Cardinal made many promises ; and with them, Enghien was forced, for some months, to be content.

These last weeks in Paris were full of excitement for the Chantilly clique, and indeed for all the Court. Besides the Coligny elopement—now almost forgiven—there were other marriages scarcely less interesting and unexpected. Henri de Chabot, one of three brothers,¹ all well known to M. le Duc, had fallen in love with Marguerite de Rohan, Duchesse de Rohan in her own right, and the greatest heiress of the day. Enghien's assistance had once more to be asked, for Chabot, from a mercenary point of view, was by no means a brilliant match ; though his friends predicted that he was not likely to want advancement. He was a highly-gifted courtier, full of tact and intelligence ; and had served the Duke as a confidant throughout the episode of Marthe du Vigean. Coligny's methods would have been out of the question in this case ; Marguerite de Rohan had an unequalled reputation for pride and virtue. She was reported to have refused her hand to no fewer than four Princes ; of whom one was Rupert, Prince Palatine, and another, Bernard, Duke of Saxe-Weimar. Enghien interviewed, in turn, the Queen, Mazarin, and the Dowager Duchesse de Rohan ; the last-named a most strenuous opponent of the marriage ;² and he prevailed on the Queen to grant a ducal patent to Chabot, giving him leave to share the title of his future wife. The elder Madame de Rohan, in desperation, laid a scheme for transporting her daughter out of reach. She came one evening to fetch her from the house of the Duchesse de Sully, intending to drive off with her into the country ; but she was checkmated by M. le Duc, who, after saying openly that he knew of her designs, and turning the whole matter into a joke, got into the carriage with the two ladies, and insisted on seeing them home. Finally, Madame de Sully and her husband were persuaded to take the young Duchess with them to their own castle on the Loire, where the marriage took place ; privately, but with a sufficient number of witnesses, of whom, however, the Dowager

¹ Charles de Chabot, Seigneur de Sainte Aulaye, killed at Lérída, 1646. Henri de Chabot, afterwards Duc de Rohan, died 1655. Guy-Aldonce de Chabot, killed at Dunkirk, 1646.

² " Mme de Rohan continue à dire tant de sotises sur le mariage de sa fille, que Mme de Rambouillet et moy la pansames quéreler avant-hier ". Madame la Princesse to M. le Duc, *A.C.*, June, 1645.]

Duchess was not one. M. le Duc's fame as a match-maker had spread far and wide ; in spite of an occasional failure, as in the case of Mademoiselle de Salnove. That his help was often invoked, and seldom in vain, may be inferred from a letter among the Chantilly archives, signed 'Louise de Béon' ;¹ in which the writer thanks him effusively for his good offices, adding :

" You are not content with the great names you have inherited, nor with those you have acquired by your victories ; you must also be called the protector of faithful lovers ".

Louise de Béon, better known as Madame de Brienne, is mentioned by Mademoiselle de Montpensier as famed for the strictness of her religious views. Nevertheless, she writes familiarly of no less celebrated a person than Ninon de Lenclos, and challenges the Duke, since nothing is beyond his powers, to arrange a marriage for her :

" I will come to her wedding if you will please to find her a husband " .²

Enghien's own love-affair meanwhile was nearing a crisis of a different nature. Before his second departure from Paris, in May, he was forced to realise that the existing state of affairs with regard to Marthe du Vigean was one which could not be prolonged. The climax was hastened by the action of Henri de Bourbon ; who now, for the first time, became aware that his son had long been dwelling on the actual prospect of a ' *démariage* ', and still refused to be convinced of the impracticability of the scheme. How the Prince gained his information is not certain ; it may only have reached him through the gossip of the Court. On the other hand, one or two writers assert that Madame de Longueville, hitherto the firm ally of her brother and her friend, was either smitten by conscience, or grew jealous of Marthe's influence ; that she told her father of Enghien's hopes and intentions ; and that a quarrel, the first between the brother and sister, was the result. Henri de Bourbon was no sooner assured of his facts, by whatever means, than he made ' *un éclat épouvant-*

¹ Wife of Henri de Loniénie, Comte du Brienne, Minister for Foreign Affairs.

² * A.C.

able'; and succeeded, at length, in impressing upon Enghien the fact that escape, by the way he had sought, was entirely and for ever out of the question. Nothing but the death of his wife could release him; his wife, whom he saw as seldom as possible, whose family dispatched her to a convent while her husband was at the wars, and who, thanks to her submissiveness and innocence, seems to have been all unconscious of the attempt against her rights. Enghien faced the situation exactly as might have been expected; guided, as he was, by a nervous and excitable, but rather cold-blooded, temperament. He reflected deliberately that Madame la Duchesse, at seventeen, was not in the least likely to die; she had been seriously ill for a short time during the winter of 1643-44, but she had now quite recovered her health. Marthe, as he well knew, would not change her views. He was too deeply in love to be satisfied with her friendship; therefore, as it seemed to him, the only alternative was to break with her altogether, without delay, and without explanation. Either of these measures, he decided, might only complicate his position still further. The course he followed was unfeeling towards Marthe, logical as it may have appeared to himself; but Enghien's emotions were apt to be at least as much an affair of the nerves as of the heart. When he went, for the last time, to take leave of her, before setting out on the campaign, it is credibly reported that he came away half-fainting; yet after five months absence he could return, to all outward seeming, as indifferent as though he had never heard her name. He cannot fairly be said to have acted on moral grounds; his conduct towards his wife was unchanged in all essentials; only he was resolved that, since nothing but dissatisfaction could come of his relations with Marthe, the episode should be considered as closed.

Marthe, under this severe ordeal, acquitted herself with courage and dignity. Her part in history was ended, but the few events of her after-life deserve to be told, if only in justice to the heroine chosen by Enghien for his early romance. Had she been influenced merely by pique, or by ambition, she might easily have found consolation in some more prosperous love-affair. M. le Duc's attentions and jealousies, during the past few years, had been, to a certain extent, compromising;

even though Mademoiselle du Vigean was generally held to be above suspicion ; still, once it was recognised that he had withdrawn his claim, other suitors were ready enough to come forward. One at least of these, the Marquis de Saint-Maigrin, an admirer of some years' standing, had even gone to the length of embarking on marriage negotiations with her family. Marthe listened to no proposals ; she had done with all such matters. She did not hide at once from the world, but her resolve had been taken. Less than two years later she entered on her novitiate at the Carmelite convent of the Rue Saint-Jaques. Her story may be traced, in some detail, by the help of two letters ; one written by her sister Anne, now Madame de Pons, to her brother, the Marquis de Fors ; the other by Henri de Chabot to M. le Duc. This last, incidentally, contains evidence that Enghien, in spite of the change in his feelings, still followed her movements with interest.

Chabot, or rather the Duc de Rohan, writes from Paris in June, 1646, that he has just been wishing Mademoiselle du Vigean farewell : " Not ", he says, " without arguments on my part, or tears on hers. We talked for three hours of all that had happened in the past, and of her resolutions for the future, which tend towards a complete retirement, as soon as time enough has passed for her reputation not to suffer, and for no one to attribute it directly to grief or anger. I assured her she would do nothing of the kind, and I cannot believe it. She told me how, after hearing one of Père Desmare's sermons, and after a great struggle with herself, she burnt all your letters and even your portrait. I had great pleasure in her conversation ; she has infinite wit and intelligence ; but, if I may say so without offence, her beauty is strangely altered ".¹

Madame de Pons' letter to her brother is dated a year later, and shows that Marthe had other opposition and incredulity to encounter besides that of the Duke de Rohan, and was finally driven to desperate measures. " You must know that my sister had kept up all the strictness you observed in her devotions, and had even increased it ; so that we all suspected her of wishing to take the veil. Madame d'Aiguillon spoke to her of

¹ A.C., June, 1646.

it, and asked if she had any such intentions. She answered, yes, and that there was no cause for surprise, as she had first told her of it two years ago"; that is to say, in June, 1645, almost immediately after Enghien's last interview. Madame d'Aiguillon begged her to wait another year, in the hope of reconciling her mother, the Baronne du Vigean, to the prospect.

Madame du Vigean was indeed the last person who could be expected to sympathise with aspirations to the religious life; she was an ambitious, self-seeking woman, who had flattered and persuaded Madame d'Aiguillon into giving her a footing at Court, and had been helped to maintain it by her daughters' social success. A meeting of friends and relations was convened; "they talked all day", says Madame de Pons, who assisted, "and many tears were shed"; till at last, a delay of six months was agreed upon. Marthe gave her consent, at the time; but a few days later she warned her sister that she must retract her promise: "Ma sœur, I shall go before a week is out". Madame de Pons argued in vain. Marthe seized an opportunity when Madame de Longueville, who still kept up their friendship, had sent for her. Half-way to the Hôtel de Longueville she told the servants who were with the carriage that they must take her to the 'Grandes Carmélites'. "There she is now", concludes her sister indignantly; "and there she has every intention of staying". "I go each day to see her; she is perfectly cheerful and determined, and sees me weep, without shedding a tear herself".

'Mademoiselle du Vigean' had ceased to exist; as soon as her novitiate was completed, Marthe signed herself according to the convention of her Order: 'Sœur Marthe de Jésus, religieuse Carmélite indigne'. Sœur Marthe is mentioned several times in the records of the convent where her vows were made; her election to the office of sub-prioress is noted in 1656, and her death in 1665. By this name also she subscribes herself in the few letters which have been preserved, addressed to her by her intimate friend, Madame de Sablé. Madame de Pons was not the only person who wept for Marthe; her loss was regretted, even in that careless age. 'Les Jeux et l'Amour' themselves mourned for her

with a kind of chastened frivolity,—“to the tune of ‘Laire lan lère’”:

“Lorsque Vigean quitta la cour,
Les Jeux, les Grâces, les Amours
Entrèrent dans le monastère.
Laire la laire lan lère
Laire la laire lan là.
Les Jeux pleurèrent ce jour-là
Ce jour la Beauté se voila,
Et fit vœu d’être solitaire”.

Enghien was no idyllic lover; the restraining influences of his boyhood had not been proof against the combined forces of example and hereditary instinct. It was probably through no scruple of his that Marthe du Vigean’s principles were not overcome. But it is worth recalling that the love of his early life was at least disinterested, and that it was offered to one whom he could respect as well as love. His romance ended, he turned for the moment to another passion, scarcely less absorbing. Again the jealous appeal of the ‘Science of Warfare’ seems to sound: “Louis, c’est à moi seul que tu te dois rendre; Les autres ne font rien que brouiller les esprits”. There can have been no truer prophet, in his time, than the unknown author of the *Masque of Dijon*.

CHAPTER VII

NÖRDLINGEN

1645

ON May 5th, 1645, the ' army of the Rhine ' was taken unawares by Mercy, and defeated at the battle of Marienthal.¹ Turenne made no attempt to palliate this misfortune, which was perhaps the most severe reverse he ever experienced ; but with characteristic determination he set to work to repair it. Many years afterwards, he was asked by some inquisitive acquaintance how the defeat had been brought about : " Par ma faute, Monsieur ", was the laconic answer. Turenne's letter to Enghien, dated May 10th, is more explicit, and declares that, " if the infantry had held their post half an hour longer, the day might have been saved ". He speaks first of his own feelings, as one sure of sympathy, and conscious of other enemies besides those of his country : " As I have the honour to be well known to Your Highness, you will be able to judge of my grief ; I am sending you an account of what took place ; but that I am assured of your honouring me with your affection, I would not spend my time in explaining this event, which will cause only joy, to many people ".² Turenne had retreated, not towards the frontier, but into the friendly territory of Hesse-Cassel. Here he found a valuable ally in ' Madame la Landgrave ', the widowed Regent of the province, who on behalf of her son, the young Landgrave, had contracted to furnish and maintain a force of ten thousand men for the French service, in return for an annual payment of ' 200,000 rixthalers '. Six thousand of these Hessians were a welcome addition to the dimin-

¹ Also known as the battle of Mergentheim, from the village near which it was fought.

² *A.C.*, May 10, 1645.

ished numbers of the Weimarians. Another, smaller, reinforcement was supplied by the Swedish General Torstenson, by whose orders four thousand men from the allied forces in Bohemia were dispatched westwards under Count Königsmarck. Thus strengthened, the 'army of the Rhine' recrossed the frontier of Hesse towards the end of June, to effect a junction with M. le Duc and the 'army of Champagne'.

Enghien, as on a former occasion, marched from Verdun by Metz and Saverne; he crossed the Rhine at Spiers, and joined Turenne at Ladenburg, near Mannheim, on July 2nd. The component parts of the united army had been little altered since the preceding year, save that the Hessian and Swedish troops replaced the losses of Fribourg and Marienthal. Enghien, in his report of the forces he had found at Verdun, pronounces the cavalry "better than he has ever seen it". On the other hand, the infantry is 'pitiable', and in great disorder; he has had to reconstitute nearly thirty companies, and to cashier their officers, hoping that those who are left may profit by this example. When these stringent measures had been carried out there remained an efficient force of twelve thousand horse and foot. Among the infantry may be noted the regiment of Irish mercenaries, known as 'Wall-Irlandais', from the name of the commanding officer, Robert Wall.¹ M. le Duc was again seconded by Guiche, now Duc de Gramont. The 'petits-mâîtres' were well to the fore; Tavannes, La Moussaye, and Guy-Aldonce de Chabot, all newly promoted, were serving as 'maréchaux de camp'. So also were Marchin, or Marsin, the Flemish soldier of fortune whose career was for many years to be closely allied to that of Enghien; and Arnould, called 'le Carabin', of the famous race of Jansenists. César de Chastellux, and Jacques de Castelnau, each recommended by the Duke for their services at Fribourg, held, respectively, the posts of 'maréchal de bataille' and 'sergent de bataille'. Espenan had been disposed of at the close of the Fribourg campaign, by a happy inspiration which caused M. le Duc to have him appointed Gover-

¹ Ramsay describes Robert Wall as being 'of a very noble and ancient Irish family'; adding that he was 'maternal great-uncle to Abbot Butler of Kilcopp'.

nor of Philippsbourg, thus removing him temporarily, without disgrace, from active service.

The main object of the present campaign, in accordance with Mazarin's instructions, was to establish the French securely in Wurtemberg and Bavaria; and, with this end in view, to secure such fortified towns as would serve to keep open the lines of communication between different points of the Empire. The greatest success that could be achieved would be to penetrate eastwards far enough to join forces with Torstenson,¹ the General commanding the allied forces in Hungary and Bohemia. Enghien marched east and south from Ladenburg along the valley of the Neckar, and seized Wimpfen; then, turning almost due east, laid siege to Rothenburg,² which surrendered after only a few days' resistance. The only serious opposition that M. le Duc encountered on his route was from one of his own subordinates. Königsmarck, the Swedish Commander, a man 'well used to wars' but "vain-glorious and self-centred, and anxious that everything should depend on him alone",³ aimed at greater liberty of action, and did not find Enghien a superior officer to his liking. From the first, relations were strained between them; and before the troops had reached Rothenburg, Königsmarck made a final assertion of independence, almost ludicrous in its abrupt completeness. The humorous side was not altogether lost on Enghien or on Gramont, in spite of their indignation, when "one fine morning there came an envoy, looking more like a scullion than a gentleman, and saying that he was sent by his Excellency Count Königsmarck to carry a farewell to His Highness",⁴ as he proposed withdrawing immediately, with his forces. Enghien was not inclined to waste words in remonstrance; his army was no place for an officer who could not obey orders. He sent back word that he was willing to accept Count Königsmarck's resignation, and wished him a pleasant journey; adding, by way of revenge, one or two other messages less fitted for translation. Königsmarck departed, and the armies of France knew him no more. His withdrawal reduced Enghien's forces from twenty-eight to twenty-four thousand

¹ Count Torstenson, the favourite General of Gustavus Adolphus.

² Rothenburg-on-the-Tauber.

³ Turenne, *Mémoires*.

⁴ *Mémoires du Maréchal-Duc de Gramont*.

men ; but even so, Mercy's twenty thousand were still outnumbered, and the French plan of campaign underwent no change.

Mercy, with his usual clear-sightedness, expended neither time nor strength in the defence of smaller places, but devoted all his energies to barring the way to Munich. From Miltenberg, on the Main, he followed a route by Hall and Feuchtwangen, skilfully keeping his enemy under observation, but attempting no engage-



ment. The French troops marched southwards from Rothenburg towards Nördlingen,¹ a small fortified town close to the Bavarian frontier. East of the town stretches an open plain, intersected by the Eger and Wörnitz rivers. Enghien's intention was, if possible, to reduce Nördlingen without delay ; or, failing that, to take up a position in the plain and prepare for a

¹ The German name is retained, in this case, as French versions vary considerably ; Norlingue, Nordlingue, and Nörtlingen are used indifferently.

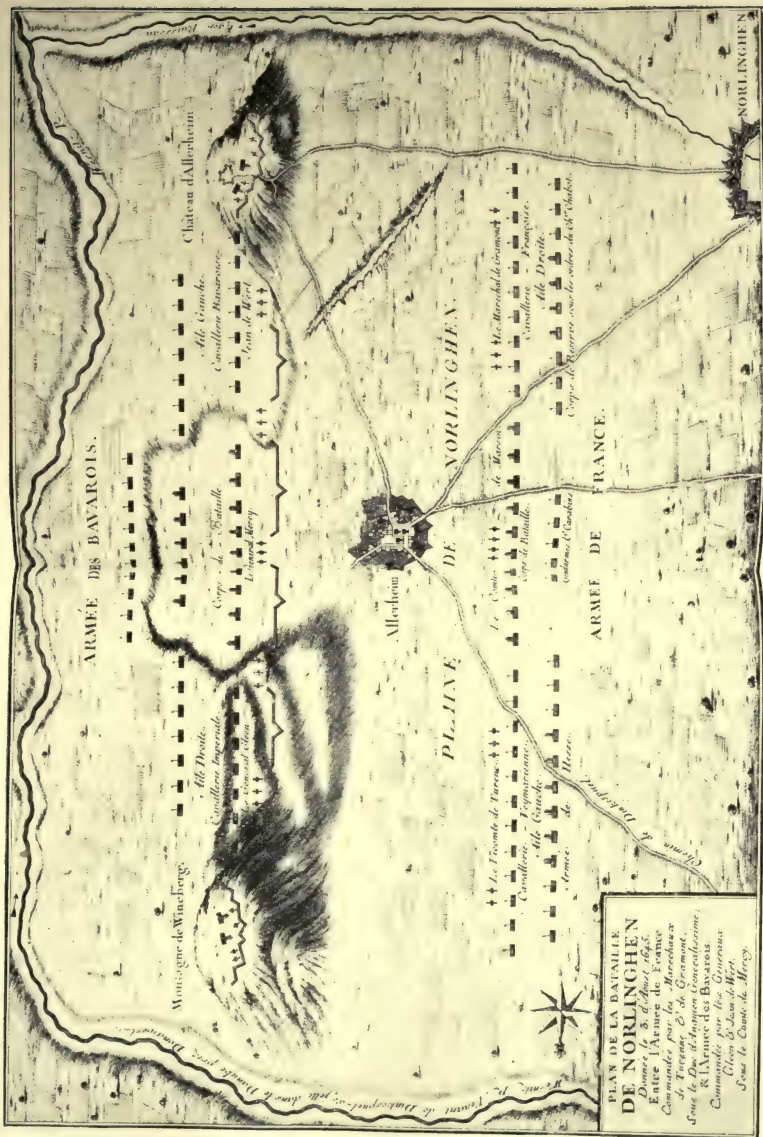
general action before Mercy could come up. Mercy, however, was not so easily to be outstripped. His forces had drawn level with the French army on August 1st, fifteen or twenty miles from Nördlingen. Enghien halted at Dinkelsbühl, and Mercy barely three miles away, at Sinnbronn. Both armies marched under cover of night, on August 2nd; their movements hidden from each other by the forest of Oettengen, which lies between Dinkelsbühl and Nördlingen. Enghien's troops had reached the plain between ten and eleven o'clock on the morning of the 3rd; but Mercy was beforehand with them. As the French Generals were breakfasting, after the march, word was brought that the enemy was not only in the plain, but less than two miles away; and that Mercy was fortifying a position round the village of Allerheim. At first the news seemed hardly credible; Enghien laughed, and said that General Mercy, if he were really so near, was too clever not to have put the river Wörnitz between them: "Ma foi, Monseigneur", answered the messenger bluntly, "Your Highness may believe what you like; but if you will give yourself the trouble to come with me to a point five hundred paces from here, I can show you that I am neither blind nor a coward; and that there is nothing between you and Mercy's army but a plain as bare as my hand". Enghien waited to hear no more; he mounted and set out, with Turenne and Gramont, to observe the enemy from the point indicated. It was, indeed, as the messenger had said; Mercy had chosen his position, and his troops were forming for action. The village, standing on raised ground, was occupied by the Bavarian infantry, which formed the enemy's centre; to the right, the position extended to the Wenneberg, a solitary hill rising abruptly from the plain; the left was flanked by the Castle of Allerheim,¹ a short half-mile from the village. The whole position was encircled on three sides by the rivers of the plain; the front only was left open to attack. Already the parish church of Allerheim,—a solid stone building surrounded by a walled churchyard,—had been profanely occupied as a redoubt, and every available house was being fortified. There was no time for deliberation;

¹ German historians give the name of Allerheim to this battle; and that of Nördlingen to the defeat of the Swedish army by the Imperialists, on September 6, 1634.

Enghien and his Marshals knew only too well what defences Mercy was capable of raising in the course of a few hours. Gramont, with Arnauld to second him, was ordered to take command of the French cavalry on the right, opposing Jean de Wirth, an enemy of long standing, who with the Bavarian cavalry was posted between the village and the castle. Gramont had at his disposal ten cavalry squadrons, and to these were added two infantry battalions, 'Fabert' and 'Wall-Irlandais'. Chabot was to support him with six reserve squadrons and four battalions of infantry. On the French left, Turenne, with the cavalry of Weimar, confronted the Austrian General, Count von Gleen, and seventeen squadrons of the far-famed Imperial horsemen; in the rear of the Weimarians, the Hessian forces were stationed, under their own General, Count Geiso. The enemy's infantry served to occupy the village. Six battalions held the church, the churchyard, and the surrounding houses; seven more were ready to support them on the farther side of the village, from which post Mercy in person was organising the defence. The French centre was composed of the artillery,—twenty-seven guns, and ten infantry battalions, French, German, and Flemish. Marsin was in command, seconded by Bellenave, one of Turenne's officers; and with them was Enghien, prepared to begin operations by directing an attack on Allerheim itself.

Turenne has explained, briefly, the reasoning on which this plan of action was founded. "The situation of the village", he says, "being slightly in advance of the enemy's line, caused some doubts as to whether we should attack immediately at that point, or first engage the wings, employing the cavalry alone". It was decided, however, that the advance to a frontal attack, under the fire of the village garrison, would be too reckless an exposure of the French and Weimarian cavalry; and the course of the two rivers, flowing by the Wenneberg on one side, and by the castle on the other, left no space in which to turn the position. Allerheim must first be attacked; orders were given for the two wings to halt, while the infantry went forward to seize the outlying houses.

Marsin, with his Flemish countrymen, made the first advance. They met with little resistance till they reached the churchyard; then, from its walls, a furious



PLAN OF NORLINGHEN, FROM A CONTEMPORARY PRINT

volley drove them back in disorder. Enghien and La Moussaye brought up the remaining battalions, and the fighting grew desperate. Mercy's improvised redoubt was none the less effective for its sacrilegious character. The French set fire to some of the houses ; others they seized, and made use of, as best they could ; but still the church seemed impregnable, and one attempt after another was repulsed. Mercy, from his coign of vantage on the outskirts of the village, surveyed the fight ; giving all directions, but taking no active part. As the hours wore on, he watched, with growing satisfaction, the vain onslaughts of the French battalions, marvelling all the while at their persistence, in the face of great losses. When, towards evening, he saw Enghien, in the thickest of the fight, encouraging his men to a final effort, he thanked God aloud that these Frenchmen had lost their wits, and that his victory was assured. Chastellux and Bellenave had fallen ; Marsin, Castelnau, and La Moussaye were disabled. The Duke's horse was struck, and fell with him, nearly crushing him, so that he was bruised from head to foot ; he was also wounded in the arm by a pistol shot. The whole of the French centre was now engaged ; while of the Bavarian reserve, four battalions were still stationed, fresh and intact, beyond Allerheim. Mercy ordered these up to meet the last and most determined attack ; he was advancing with them, and had barely come within range of fire, when a shot struck him and he fell dead. His soldiers, who had almost worshipped him, were seized with the courage of despair ; they charged into the village with such fury that the French, resisting fiercely, were driven out on to the plain. But the Bavarians, having won this momentary triumph, were too completely demoralised by their loss to follow it up. No leader could take Mercy's place ; the troops halted, irresolute and in disorder, in and around Allerheim. The fight was stayed ; Enghien, battered and exhausted, but with spirit still undefeated, at last had leisure to look round him, and to take note of what was passing in other parts of the field.

It was no encouraging sight that met his eyes. The cavalry, on both wings, had advanced into action, according to orders, as soon as the force occupying Allerheim was fairly engaged. Looking towards the right, Gramont's troops, and even Chabot's reserve,

were revealed in hopeless confusion, scattered and hotly pursued by Jean de Wirth. On the left, the Weimarian squadrons were maintaining an equal combat with Gleen's cavalry, and here, if anywhere, lay a hope of averting total disaster. Enghien lost no time in joining Turenne, and they conferred hastily together. Turenne asked that Geiso should be ordered to bring up the Hessians of the second line, and that M. le Duc should support him with them while he undertook the first charge. Gleen's defeat must be secured; then, with the Imperial squadrons dispersed, there might still be a chance of encountering Jean de Wirth on his return from the pursuit, and engaging him separately. Nothing could be more characteristic of the two Marshals than the account subsequently given by each of his own share in the action. Gramont's narrative, picturesque and vivid, describes with perfect complacency his defeat and capture. Turenne, in plain, unvarnished terms, tells almost shamefacedly of his success, making no comment, of praise or blame, on any officer, save only that M. le Duc, in leading the charge of the second line, "acted with equal courage and good judgment". The enemy's artillery was posted on the slope of the Wenneberg, and the attacking forces advanced successively under its fire. Turenne was hit, but escaped with a slight wound; the Duke's second horse was killed under him. Gleen's cavalry,—a magnificent array, whose first line was formed by the 'Imperial Cuirassiers',—withstood Turenne's charge effectually. The Weimarians were beaten back, though without losing ground to any great extent; at one or two points they even gained a slight advantage; but numbers were against them. Then the Hessians dashed forward, with Enghien at their head; Turenne's squadrons rallied; together they charged the Imperial forces and broke their line. Almost in an instant the fortunes of the day had changed, and the rout of the Austrian cavalry was as complete as that of Gramont had been. Gleen was taken prisoner, and the guns on the hillside were seized. This much accomplished, the French Generals drew off from the Wenneberg, turning short to the right, and prepared to surround Allerheim, where a few battalions of the Bavarian infantry still held their ground.

Close on six hours had passed in the heat of action,

and darkness was falling. Notwithstanding Gleen's defeat and Mercy's death, the victory might still have hung in the balance if Jean de Wirth had been prompt enough to attack the Hessian cavalry in flank, before the squadrons had re-formed after the charge. But the Dutch mercenary was, at heart, less a General than a soldier of fortune. His pursuit had carried him two leagues across the plain, to where the baggage had been left that morning, when the French army made ready in haste for action. The occasion was irresistible; the Bavarians fell on the spoil, in spite of some resistance from the men of the 'Margrave' regiment who had been left to guard the camp. The fighting and plundering continued till sunset; then, instead of bearing to the left, or making any attempt to discover how Gleen had fared, Wirth and his horsemen retraced their steps in a direct line; slowly, for their horses were tired with the day's work, and some of them heavily laden with spoils of war. It was night before they came near Allerheim; the last defenders of the church and churchyard, finding themselves completely surrounded and apparently without hope of relief, had laid down their arms and marched out of the village as prisoners; while their own cavalry, unseen in the darkness, was actually only a few hundred yards away. Wirth, hearing from a few stragglers how the day had gone, made no efforts to draw nearer, and ordered a retreat towards Donauwörth, on the banks of the Danube, fifteen miles away. The artillery, with the exception of four light guns, he was forced to abandon. Three thousand of Mercy's army lay dead on the field, and nearly two thousand were left prisoners. Wirth drew off his troops under cover of night, and was out of sight by the morning. The armies of France and Weimar were in no condition to undertake a vigorous pursuit; the loss of life had been no less heavy on their side,¹ and they were content with the certainty that the enemy had crossed the Danube in full retreat.

Turenne's part in the victory of Nördlingen was

¹ Jean de Wirth, in writing to Count Hatzfeldt (Kriegs-archiv, Vienna), estimates the French losses at five thousand; but this is manifestly an exaggeration. The correct estimate seems to be rather over three thousand; Turenne, unflinchingly truthful, writes: "I think the losses of the King's (*i.e.* the French) army were greater than those of the enemy". He gives 'between three and four thousand' as the total.

the atonement he offered for the defeat of Marienthal. Enghien made no secret of all that he owed to his subordinate. The dispatch written by a secretary, and sent to Le Tellier on August 7, bears a postscript in the Duke's own hand : " Our German troops must positively be given what they ask. It was they who won the battle, and M. de Turenne performed prodigies ". To Mazarin he wrote, still more emphatically, that " but for the marvellous courage and efficiency of M. de Turenne, the battle must have been lost ". Mazarin reports this compliment in a letter to Turenne ; declaring himself, with what truth may be conjectured, to have been affected to tears by M. le Duc's generosity. Turenne records a public acknowledgment as well ; not in his memoirs,—there no such gratifications find a place,—but in a private letter to his family : " I think everyone in Paris will have to believe that this victory was owing to the German cavalry alone. M. le Duc paid me more compliments than I can tell you, before the whole army. It is impossible to do justice to his personal share in the action, or to the effect of his courage ". It is also impossible, Turenne continues, to believe how well he and M. le Duc agree together : " I beg that you will express to Madame la Princesse, and to Madame de Longueville, how much obliged I am to him in this ".

The French losses had fallen most heavily on the infantry round Allerheim. Turenne, who was not given to over-stating facts, declares that the whole force of infantry left to them amounted to not more than twelve or fifteen hundred men ; the ten battalions engaged in the attack on the village had been almost wiped out. The right wing suffered least, having offered least resistance. Gramont ascribes his own defeat to a fault in Arnould's reconnaissance. The French squadrons, drawn up for action, looked straight before them across a tract of ground crossed by many small streams, marshy and untrustworthy in places, but not necessarily impassable. Wirth and his forces were still invisible, being concealed by a depression in the ground, stretching from the village to the castle of Allerheim. Arnould's report was that the marsh was impracticable, save for a narrow road passing near the castle. Gramont accepted this statement, perhaps too readily, without attempting to verify it ; his troops were ordered to bear to the right, and to

alter their formation so as to follow the road. Wirth's cavalry, charging out of their shelter, crossed the ground pronounced impracticable by Arnould, and attacked in flank, carrying all before them. Gramont could not check the rout; but he placed himself at the head of 'Fabert' and 'Wall-Irlandais', who stood their ground after the cavalry were in flight. The Bavarians were almost upon them, when these two battalions fired so furious a volley that they opened a breach in the enemy's ranks. Into this breach Gramont flung himself, with a handful of men, hoping to rally the rest; and, as a natural result, found himself immediately surrounded, and a prisoner. The dangers of the day were by no means over for him, even after his surrender. He was brought at once into the Bavarian camp by one Sponheim, the officer to whom he had given up his sword; the news of Mercy's death had not yet reached the camp, and Sponheim believed himself to be bringing his prisoner to the General. Gramont tells how, among Mercy's personal followers, was 'un petit page Lorrain', a boy of fifteen, who heard that the French General had been taken, and determined to avenge his master's death. Gramont was riding a led horse, with the rein lying loose; as he passed, the boy, unarmed, flew upon him; seized a pistol from the holsters, aimed at his head, and pulled the trigger. "By good fortune", says the Marshal, "the pistol had been discharged already during the battle, and so did no harm". The Bavarian officers would have punished with death this offence alike against honour and discipline; but Gramont himself begged off the culprit, urging that he was nothing more than a child, and thus saving him from being pistolled on the spot; for all German and Austrian troops had a well-earned reputation for strictness in such matters.¹

Following this incident, the Marshal gives a memorable account of the retreat to Donauwörth by night, and the crossing of the Danube in dire haste and confusion. He himself, as a tribute to his rank and importance, was kept apart from the other prisoners, and placed in the charge of a small body of dragoons, whose duty was not only to prevent his escape, but also to guard him from further attacks. On the same road, not far from him, the dead body of Mercy passed, flung into

¹ *Mémoires du Maréchal-Duc de Gramont.*

a cart ; it was no time for ceremonious honouring of the dead. As they waited on the river's bank for the word to cross over, Gramont saw—and marvelled at the sight—"the man who had commanded the Imperial armies with such supreme power, and who, five or six hours earlier, had been feared throughout all Germany, lying stripped, face upwards, in the moonlight" ; his resting-place 'the miserable cart of a vivandière' ; and his watchers, two of the wretched women who followed the camp. The Bavarian soldiers were filled with such indignation at the sight, that Gramont had to be hidden from them, in one of the neighbouring houses. His perils, however, ended with the march ; he was honourably received at Ingolstadt, and treated with great consideration by the Elector Maximilian of Bavaria. 'Madame l'Électrice' also distinguished him, and sent him a present of a white silk scarf, embroidered by her own hands. Before a month had passed, his captivity was at an end ; he had been exchanged for Gleen, and was able to rejoin M. le Duc at the siege of Dinkelsbühl.

The town of Nördlingen had offered little or no resistance to the invading army. Some defence might have been attempted by the garrison ; but the burghers, in this case a stronger party, carried the day, and threw open the gates. The city was a welcome haven for the French troops, who found there, besides ammunition and horses, an invaluable store of medical comforts for the wounded. Eight days of rest were allowed before they resumed their march ; much refreshed, but too far reduced in numbers to attempt any further advance into the enemy's country. Reinforcements were not to be counted on ; any future success must be achieved nearer the frontier. From Nördlingen, Enghien marched northwards to Dinkelsbühl, which capitulated on August 24th. Heilbronn was the town next to be invested ; but before the siege had begun, the Duke himself was entirely disabled for taking any active part in it. The illness which attacked him is described as 'a continued fever' ; aggravated by the severe nervous and physical strain of the past weeks. It was at Dinkelsbühl that he first fell ill ; but as he could not be left helpless, in a place so insufficiently protected, he was obliged to follow the army to Heilbronn ; a distance of about sixty miles. Turenne and Gramont

were not a little perplexed by the situation. M. le Duc was evidently quite unfit to stay where he was, exposed to the dangers and hardships of the siege; yet it was difficult to see how he could be transported elsewhere, through a country full of the enemy's troops, when he was scarcely able to stand, far less to ride. The choice seemed to lie between the risks of his dying in camp, or being taken prisoner on the road; a grave responsibility for the two Marshals, in either case. Enghien, having reached the limit of endurance, implored Gramont pathetically, "by all the friendship he had for him", to find some means of conveying him to Philippsbourg, the nearest town where he could be sure of comparative rest and quiet. Gramont, in his own words, "was inconsolable over M. le Duc's condition". He consulted with Turenne and the assembled 'maréchaux de camp'; and it was finally agreed that the Duke should be sent to Philippsbourg under his care; no officer of less importance could be entrusted with such a mission. Gramont asked for an escort of one thousand horse; more could not well be spared, and would only have attracted the enemy's attention. "In such a case as this", he says, "every instant is precious"; and the journey was perilous ('le pas était glissant'). Enghien was in a high fever, and at intervals, delirious; but notwithstanding all dangers, he was placed in a litter, and travelled the thirty-five miles between Heilbronn and Philippsbourg without a break, save for one halt, to feed the horses. Gramont, with a thankful heart, bestowed his charge in the Castle of Philippsbourg and saw him regain consciousness; then took an affectionate leave of him, and hurried back to join Turenne. "I thought", he writes to Mazarin, just before setting out, "that I could not well allow anyone but myself to have the care of M. le Duc in bringing him to this place of quietness and safety; I have accomplished it without any hindrance, and am now starting to rejoin the army. My journey may be rather lively ('un peu gaillard'); a good fourteen hours' march, and the enemy on the look-out. Still, I hope not to see Ingolstadt again this year".

Enghien was soon out of danger; but there could be no question of his resuming his command before the end of the campaign, and it was some weeks before he was able to bear the journey to Paris. Tourville

sends word to Mazarin, on September 11th, that "the doctor gives hope of a good recovery; this is all our consolation".¹ The Duke, he says, is so much exhausted by his illness that it must be a long time before he regains his strength. "Monseigneur le Duc commands me to beg Your Eminence, if Heilbronn should be taken, to give the Governorship to M. de Marsin, a gentleman of great worth, who served admirably in the last action". During his convalescence at Philippsbourg, Enghien found himself in the company of several officers who had been wounded at Nördlingen, and who, like him, had been brought to this safest of frontier towns as to a haven of refuge. Among them was one, at least, whose society was thoroughly congenial to him: Charles Marguetel de Saint-Denis, known to fame as the *Sieur de St. Évremond*; at that time a lieutenant in the 'Gardes de M. le Duc'. St. Évremond was temporarily crippled by a shot in the knee, but his lively spirit and conversational powers were in no way impaired. His companionship was a godsend to M. le Duc, who, before he was strong enough to read to himself, employed this lieutenant of his guards to read aloud to him. The choice of subjects was left to St. Évremond, who started on the works of Rabelais; but in these, for some reason, the Duke refused to take any pleasure. They were obliged, to have recourse to the lighter classical authors; and readings from Petronius were found to be entirely successful.

The news of Enghien's serious illness caused great agitation at Court. Already the death-roll of Nördlingen had spread as much dismay as was possible among that light-hearted company; everyone seemed to be mourning the loss of a relation or a friend. "Our losses are so heavy", Mazarin warned the Queen, when he brought her the dispatches, "that Your Majesty can scarcely rejoice over the victory". Madame de Rambouillet was stricken by the death of her only son, Léon d'Angennes, Marquis de Pisani, a 'damoiseau' who had preferred active service with M. le Duc to the most brilliant prospects of a courtier. Immediately on the shock of these tidings came word of Enghien's danger. Madame la Princesse was in despair at not being allowed to set out at once for Philippsbourg: "I have been four days without hearing news

¹ A.C., September 11, 1645.

of you ", she writes, " and I am in such anxiety that I cannot tell what I am doing ; if it were possible for me to go where you are, I should have been there long ago ".¹ The Queen sent a letter, written with her own hand, expressing her concern, and desiring ' M. mon Cousin ' to make no attempt to rejoin the army, but to consider his health only, and to return to Paris as soon as he was equal to the fatigues of the journey.

Mazarin urges the same precautions. " Although ", he says, " it would be an act of presumption on my part to add my prayers to the wishes of Her Majesty ; but after so acute and dangerous an illness a relapse is always to be feared ".² The Marshal de l'Hôpital, forgetting Enghien's high-handed treatment of him on an earlier occasion, sends cordial congratulations on his recovery : " As the illness of Your Highness had brought great and just sorrow to the Court, and to all good Frenchmen, so the news of your restoration to health has brought them untold joy ".³ Gaspard de Coligny protests, in less formal language, that since Monseigneur's convalescence is now established, he feels able to bear, without even swearing, " all the kicks that it may please Fortune to deal him ".⁴ The ' *petits-mâîtres* ' interspersed their heartfelt congratulations with burlesque lamentations over the loss of M. le Duc's hair ; for his head had been shaved during the fever. The inevitable verses on the subject are supplied by a writer of some note, the Comte de Bussy-Rabutin, cousin and correspondent of Madame de Sévigné ; and sent by him from the camp at Heilbronn to Lenet in Paris :

" Au reste nous avons passé
 Par d'épouvantables alarmes ;
 Si le prince fût trépassé,
 Combien de cris, combien de larmes !
 Mais enfin Dieu nous l'a rendu
 Comme il étoit, tout plein de charmes,
 A cela près qu'il est tondû.
 Cette tête si belle et si bonne,
 Pour qui la déesse Bellone
 A toujours eu tant de respect,
 Vient de recevoir un échec :
 D'un barbier la main trop osée
 De son ornement l'a privée.
 Dis-nous pourquoi Dieu l'a permis,
 Vu qu'il paraît de ses amis ?

¹ A.C., September 25, 1645.

³ * A.C., October, 1645.

² * A.C., October, 1645.

⁴ * A.C., 1645.

Je crois, moi qui ne suis pas bête,
Que Dieu ne veut pas que la tête
Du plus grand de tous les guerriers
Soit couverte que de lauriers”.

The Duke's appearance, shorn, and thinner even than before his illness, may well have created a sensation on his return; but his friends were presently consoled; his hair grew again, in spite of Bussy-Rabutin's ingenious suggestion, and was soon as conspicuous as ever.

Towards the end of September, Enghien left Philippsbourg and travelled by slow stages to Chantilly. Madame la Princesse had occupied herself with every imaginable preparation for his comfort. She went from the Court at Fontainebleau to receive him; accompanied by Madame la Duchesse, who found herself allowed a brief hour of comparative importance. One of Henri de Bourbon's confidential secretaries sends word to his master that the meeting between the Duke and Duchess has passed off well; “in a manner as courteous and honourable as could be wished”.¹ Enghien had many visitors during the month he spent in completing his recovery at Chantilly. Among others was the Baron de Sirot, lately returned to France after a captivity dating from the defeat of Rottweil. Sirot, in the course of these two years, had had much personal intercourse with Mercy, for whom he had conceived a fervent admiration. “Well, Baron”, said Enghien, as he greeted him, “I wanted you at Nördlingen. You might have had your revenge on the Imperialists”. “Mon Prince”, answered Sirot, “let us not speak of the unfortunate; you have beaten them now, but they beat us first, and fortune is ever inconstant. I am overjoyed at Your Highness' success at this action; but I regret infinitely the death of General Mercy; he was a great man, and greater even than he seemed; brave in war, and faithful to his word. I have proved him on both points. Your Highness will allow him the tribute he deserves; you have seen him in fight; but you had not my experience of his other qualities”.² Enghien was willing enough to join in praise of Mercy. Both he and Turenne freely admitted that this greatest of their adversaries “never

¹ A.C., 1646.

² *Mémoires du Baron de Sirot.*

missed a single opportunity, and never failed to penetrate their designs, as surely as though he had been present at their councils ". Neither was destined to meet such an opponent again, till the day when Condé and Turenne were measured against each other.

M. le Duc, taking up his abode again in Paris towards the close of the year, found his favour and interest more than ever in demand. The levees which he held, with all the state appertaining to a Prince of the Blood, were eagerly attended by the nobles of the Court, and by ' *messieurs du parlement* ' as well. He entertained, moreover, on his own account, with a magnificence which greatly disturbed the Prince, his father. In fact, the only amendment in Enghien's conduct towards his wife after the question of the ' *démariage* ' had been disposed of, was the one least likely to be approved by his family ; for whereas formerly he had been content to ignore her, it now occurred to him that the world, at least, should treat the Duchesse d'Enghien with some consideration. He insisted that large sums of money should be forthcoming to provide her with an establishment worthy of her husband's dignity ; Madame la Duchesse must have her allowance, and having it, must spend it ; economies were forbidden. Apart from these claims, M. le Duc showed no greater domestic inclinations than before. He had no wish to entangle himself in any serious love-affair ; " *il faisoit le fanfaron contre la galanterie* " ; but his manner of life was increasingly reckless and unprincipled. Henri de Bourbon, the wildness of whose own youth had been second to none, remonstrated vainly on both moral and religious grounds. Enghien was now surrounded, not only by the ' *petits-mâîtres* ', but by a circle of the least orthodox writers and scientists of the hour ; an unscrupulous company, for the most part, whose cleverness—often brilliant—was strongly tinged with charlatanism. Their intercourse served as a kind of intellectual dissipation to the Duke, who developed an insatiable curiosity in the matter of all forms of religious belief, or unbelief. Atheists, Deists, Socinians, exponents of every creed and denomination, all were alike entertained. The discussions were shared by such men as St. Évremond, Bussy-Rabutin, and Bourdelot, the learned, if somewhat disreputable, doctor of medicine who afterwards

entered the service of Christina of Sweden, and who figures in the correspondence of Pascal. Enghien still kept up a few outward forms of religion, such as were required of all Princes and public officials on state occasions ; but he made no secret of his own heterodox views, and probably rather enjoyed the scandal they sometimes created. It may be that his new associates were not entirely responsible. The example set him from childhood by the Christian princes before his eyes might have gone far to destroy confidence in any faith they professed.

The 'angels' of Chantilly and Liancourt did not take much part in theological arguments ; their interests were mainly literary and sentimental. Other women, not less gifted, of riper experience and more masculine intellect, joined freely in the discussions ; notably the Princess Anne de Gonzague, better known as 'La Palatine', whose friendship was to be a powerful factor in Condé's later life. Anne de Gonzague, younger sister of the Duchesse de Nevers, had reached the age of thirty in 1645. Her youth had passed in adventures which no writer of romance could have improved upon ; at sixteen she had eloped from a convent with the Duc de Guise,¹ a man of whom it was truly said that "no woman could praise him without failing in duty to her sex". Within a year he had deserted her ; and she had since married Edward, Prince Palatine, son of the dethroned King of Bohemia, and brother of Prince Rupert. Of her mental powers, no less a judge than Cardinal de Retz asserted that "Queen Elizabeth of England had not more capacity for affairs of state". Her religious views, at this time, were even less orthodox than those of M. le Duc ; like him she was consumed by intellectual curiosity, and to tell or to hear some new thing was as irresistible to her as to the Athenians of old.

Marie de Gonzague, scarcely less than her sister, was a friend whose keen and commanding intelligence appealed strongly to Enghien ; he was a constant frequenter of her 'salon' at the Hôtel de Nevers, and but for her marriage, which practically entailed exile from France, she might well have played a yet more important part in his life. Throughout the autumn of 1645 all eyes were turned on Princess Marie.

¹ Henri de Lorraine, grandson of 'le Balafre'.

Ladislas VII, King of Poland, had signified his intention of making a second marriage, and also a wish that his bride should be a French Princess. Proposals had first been made to Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who rejected them with unqualified scorn ; and indeed, King Ladislas had little to offer but his crown. The difference in their ages, Mademoiselle might have overlooked ; but he was, by all accounts, repulsive to look on (' haïssable de sa personne ') and brutal in manners ; moreover, his kingdom was remote and barbarous. Mademoiselle had every reason to hope for a better fate. Marie de Gonzague, on the other hand, occupied a slightly ambiguous position at the French Court. Neither her birth, nor her fortune, was equal to that of a royal princess ; she had been thought no match for a Prince of the reigning House ; yet any bridegroom of lower rank she considered no match for her. Monsieur had been in love with her, and was with difficulty prevented from marrying her, after the death of his first wife. Since that time rumour had given her many lovers, of whom Cinq-Mars was the most celebrated. Now, at length, her ambition was so far gratified that she found herself prospectively a Queen. Mademoiselle having refused, there was a dearth of eligible princesses, and Madame la Princesse had urged her friend's claim with the authorities, setting on M. de Duc to do the like. Possibly these same authorities did not regret an opportunity for ridding themselves of a clever, ambitious, and intriguing Princess. The Queen-Regent, in any case, was not reluctant to accept the idea, and smoothed away the objection that the bride was not of royal birth, by announcing that she should be married with all the state of a daughter of France. A portrait of Princess Marie was sent to Warsaw, and found such favour with the King, that he insisted on the wedding preparations being set forward immediately.

The marriage festivities drew all the Court to Paris. Chantilly, for the moment, was deserted ; and the clique itself began to show signs of a changed character. Enghien had done with romance ; Madame de Longueville and some other of the ' angels ' were beginning to turn their attention from poetry to affairs of State. Already, on the far horizon, there had risen the shadow of the Fronde.

CHAPTER VIII

COURTRAI, MARDYCK, AND DUNKIRK

1645-46

THE wedding of Princess Marie de Gonzague was the first public ceremony at which Enghien appeared after his illness. Ladislas VII was married to his French bride by proxy on November 6th, 1645; a special ambassador from Poland represented the bridegroom, and the train sent with him to escort the new Queen back to her dominions, astounded the whole Court by its barbaric splendour. The Queen-Regent was as good as her word. Princess Marie was married as a daughter of France; and this spurious promotion gave a welcome opportunity for the display of private jealousies. Thus, the House of Condé spared no pains to show her royal honours; partly for friendship's sake, and partly to emphasise the unconcealed annoyance of the Houses of Orleans and Guise. The disputes beforehand as to what order of precedence should be observed during the actual ceremony, were of so fierce and complicated a nature, that the Queen gave up the subject in despair; she declared that the wedding should not take place, as had been intended, in Notre-Dame, but in the private chapel of the Palais-Royal, where want of space would make it impossible for any Prince to demand a special prie-dieu for himself. Mademoiselle could scarcely be persuaded to make the prescribed visit to the bride and offer her congratulations; was she to accept a 'tabouret', while this Queen of a few hours' standing, whom till now she had always preceded, occupied the coveted 'chaise à dos'? For once Mademoiselle was in full agreement with 'Madame', her stepmother;¹ they rejoiced together when the newly married Queen

¹ Marguerite de Lorraine, sister of Duke Charles IV; second wife of Gaston d'Orléans.

arrived inopportunately to make her farewells to Monsieur, at the moment when His Royal Highness was being shaved ; and found herself obliged to wait half an hour before he could receive her. Fortunately, Marie de Gonzague was gifted with a sense of humour ; and, not having been born a Bourbon, she was able to endure these grievous insults with comparative calm. Amends were offered by those whose support was worth more than that of Monsieur, or even of Mademoiselle. The Queen-Regent gave a magnificent ball in her honour, at which the Polish envoys were treated with all possible respect ; the little King, who, at seven years old, was already an accomplished dancer, himself led out the bride ; and if courtiers are to be believed, his performance must indeed have been a charming sight. When the Queen of Poland left Paris, the King, the Queen-Regent, Madame la Princesse, and M. le Duc accompanied her to the city gates ; while Monsieur and the 'Guisards' held aloof, and did not even send representatives. In justice to the departing bride, it should be said that she showed great reluctance, at the last, to take her leave ; ambition had not deadened all her regrets for the past or her fears for the future. Her arrival in Warsaw, and her reception by the ferocious and barely civilised old King, were enough to daunt the stoutest-hearted Princess ; but she had chosen her part, and played it with skill and courage. It was not long before she was able to establish an influence in her new sphere ; and her future life was to offer free scope for her adventurous spirit.

Throughout the winter months trivial disputes succeeded each other between M. le Duc and his cousins of Orleans. One of many disturbances is worth recalling, since it introduces a personage destined to play an important part in Enghien's career : Paul de Gondi, afterwards Cardinal de Retz, known at that time as 'M. le Coadjuteur', from his office of Coadjutor, or Suffragan, to the Archbishop of Paris. Retz is vividly revealed, in mind and person, both in his own memoirs and in various contemporary portraits. A dark, ill-favoured, intelligent face ; an awkward, undersized figure ; a great command of audacious eloquence, and the brain of a conspirator of the first rank. The Coadjutor's attitude towards the religious aspect of his office was frankly and even ostentatiously contemptuous ;

he writes with conscious pride of his duels and his love-affairs ; but its political advantages he could appreciate to the utmost. One gift, invaluable to a statesman, he possessed in full : he was an admirable judge of his fellow-men ; his definitions of character are among the most illuminating of their kind. Few ever sounded Enghien's mind and disposition as he did ; and no one has written of him more justly, on the whole, or with greater insight. Retz was not many years older than the Duke, and was recommended to him by two qualities which Enghien seldom failed to recognise : a quick wit, and dauntless personal courage. In addition, he had early contrived to offend Gaston d'Orléans ; no more was needed to call M. le Duc to his side. The offence in question was, briefly, that the Coadjutor, in virtue of his office, had accepted precedence of Monsieur in Notre-Dame ; he was ' censed ' before him at Vespers. There could have been no doubt of Monsieur's prior claim elsewhere ; but in a consecrated place, even a humble ecclesiastic must pass before a Prince of this world. Retz himself pleaded his case : " Did not the last of the Carmelite brothers go up to adore the Cross on Good Friday before Your Royal Highness ? " Gaston, left to himself, might have passed the matter over ; but was assiduously stirred up to wrath by the Abbé de la Rivière, and other untiring mischief-makers, till he vowed, at length, that the Coadjutor should give place to him in church or out. The Queen sent for Retz, and explained to him " that Monsieur was in a great rage ; and that she was very sorry for it ; still, he was Monsieur, and she could not but support his claim " ; amends must be made publicly, by the granting of whatever precedence he wished, at Vespers on the following Sunday. The order was forcibly seconded by Mazarin ; and as Retz still continued anything but submissive, messengers were sent later to warn him that Monsieur was prepared to use force, and would have him taken from Notre-Dame by his own guards, if he refused to give way. Retz admits his own want of forethought in embarking on a quarrel with a Prince of Gaston's rank. " It was the most foolish act of my life ", he says, " yet it served me well. My audacity pleased M. le Duc, to whom I had the honour to be related, and who hated the Abbé de la Rivière ". Enghien confronted Mazarin, and de-

clared that Retz was a relation and a protégé of his, and that no one should lay a finger on him. At this point Henri de Bourbon intervened, bent on averting any open breach between his son and the Court. He prevailed, with some difficulty, on the Coadjutor, to wait formally on Monsieur, and to offer, not the suggested amends, but an elaborate apology, putting forward the rule of the Church. Monsieur, never long of one mind, had by now forgotten his anger, and received the offender amiably. Retz triumphed, and Mazarin added another item to his record against M. le Duc.

Following hard on such dissensions, in the spring of 1646 there came, to the amazement of all Paris, the news that Monsieur was to resume his command in Flanders, and that Enghien was to serve with him as his Lieutenant-General. M. le Duc was to command his own troops, otherwise the 'army of Champagne'; his official position towards Gaston d'Orléans would be the same as that which Turenne and Gramont had formerly held towards himself. The circumstances which had led up to this unexpected announcement, were in reality simple enough. Nördlingen, and the death of Mercy, had arrested the advance of the Imperial forces, and shifted the principal scene of war. Mazarin had convinced himself that the chief efforts of the French army must now be directed, not towards Germany, but to the Low Countries, where the Spaniards, during the past year, had gained ground, in spite of the supposed influence of Monsieur and the real efforts of Gassion. Neither supplies nor reinforcements had ever been denied to the 'army of Picardy' under Monsieur's command, and still no lasting success seemed attainable. Mazarin, it was said, had at length consulted Gassion, and asked him plainly what more could be required. Gassion, with his usual directness, answered: "We want a General like M. le Duc". If Enghien were to command in Flanders, it could only be as second to Monsieur, whose rank demanded the first place, and even so, Mazarin may well have doubted whether His Royal Highness would sanction the appointment. Two years earlier, Gaston had resisted the suggestion of Enghien's serving with him in any capacity. But now, his views had changed; his campaigns had given him a certain confidence, and he was gratified by the prospect of having, even nominally, at his

orders a subordinate as distinguished as M. le Duc. Moreover, Enghien's presence, on any campaign, was held to ensure success ; and Gaston d'Orléans, Commander-in-Chief, could not fail to reap a share of the attendant glory. Enghien, when the scheme was propounded to him, did not hesitate long. The disadvantages of being associated with Monsieur in any serious undertaking were sufficiently obvious. On the other hand, there would be an escape from the difficulties invariably connected with a German campaign : the long waiting for phantom reinforcements ; the dreariness of manœuvring, for weeks at a time, with a small army over immense tracts of country, perhaps without so much as a sight of the enemy. In the limited area of the Low Countries a certain amount of hand-to-hand fighting might fairly be counted on. A campaign in Flanders, at the present crisis, not only gave greater chance of personal distinction, but was also, from Enghien's point of view, incomparably more entertaining than a possible series of operations on the German frontier. M. le Duc accepted the offered post ; and told his friends that, since he had begun the conquest of Flanders at Rocroy, it was but just that he should take this opportunity of finishing it.

The Low Countries had long been as popular a seat of war as Germany was the reverse ; and when it was made known that M. le Duc himself was to lead an army across the northern frontier, the rush of ' volontaires ' was unparalleled. Those who had been willing to follow him before, were ardent now. The younger nobles surrounded him in a swarm ; all zealous, all valiant ; some, at least, with no other qualifications. Enghien was divided between pleasure in their society and an acute dislike, instinctive rather than conscientious, of seeing military affairs mismanaged. In the end he contrived to find, or to make, nominal occupations for the greater number of them ; and thereby multiplied his own cares ; for, rather than be accused of favouritism or want of professional discernment, he worked doubly and trebly hard to cover their deficiencies. For effective help he looked chiefly to Gramont, the only Marshal under his command, and to the most competent of the ' petits-mâîtres ',—Coligny, Chabot, and La Moussaye, three faithful companions-in-arms. Monsieur had under his direct orders three

Marshals of France : Gassion and Rantzau, each in command of a division ; and La Meilleraie, exercising his functions as 'grand maître d'artillerie'. But not one of these tried warriors could compete in influence with the Abbé de la Rivière; who, though emphatically a man of peace, in character as well as by profession, was too indispensable to be spared from Monsieur's suite. The whole staff watched eagerly to see whether M. le Duc would succeed where others had failed, and whether he or La Rivière was most likely to control the unstable mind of the Commander-in-Chief.

All the interest of the Court was centred in the army whose operations were to be directed by two Princes of the Blood. The Queen-Regent, with her two sons, followed by an imposing retinue of ministers and courtiers, journeyed as far as Amiens, and there took leave of Monsieur, in the early days of June. The Commander-in-Chief joined his forces at Auxi-le-Château, on the borders of Picardy and Artois. Enghien was assembling the 'army of Champagne' farther eastwards, at Marle ; while Gassion, whose division had not left Flanders, came from Menin across the frontier to attend the first council of war. The combined strength of the armies of Picardy and Champagne amounted to thirty thousand men. The enemy's forces, about equal in number, had been placed by the Spanish King, Philip iv, under the supreme command of Duke Charles of Lorraine, whose army was still in the pay of the Austro-Spanish alliance ; Gaston d'Orléans, married to a Princess of Lorraine, was thus, incidentally, taking the field against his own brother-in-law. To the Spaniards and Lorrainers had lately been added an Austrian contingent, led by two well-known soldiers of fortune : Ottavio Piccolomini and Guillaume de Lamboy. General Beck and the Marquis de Caracena commanded the Spanish and Lorraine troops under Duke Charles. The main strength of these allied troops was concentrated on the banks of the Scheldt, between Tournai and Mortagne, preparing to resist the expected advance of the French into Hainault. Farther to the west, a detached force, under Caracena, was stationed between Ypres and Lille.

Monsieur presided over the first council of the Campaign at Arras, on June 7th. This was the first trial of strength between Enghien and La Rivière, and the

officers present observed, with some dismay, that the advantage was by no means entirely on the side of the Duke. Gaston's notions as to a plan of campaign were of the vaguest description. Alone, he would probably have been a tool,—though but an indifferent one,—in the hands of his Lieutenant-General, and so M. le Duc had expected to find him ; but the Lieutenant-General, in this case, had been absent for some weeks, bringing his troops from Marle, by way of Landrecies and Bapaume ; whereas La Rivière never left his master's immediate neighbourhood, and had made the most of his late opportunities. His strongest feeling, at the moment, was a keen anxiety for his own personal safety ; he abhorred the idea of any dangerous undertaking, and looked on M. le Duc, not unnaturally, as the greatest enemy of his peace of mind. Under the circumstances, it was easy for him to persuade Monsieur that he owed it to his position to resist any proposal of Enghien's, and to exercise to the utmost his power of veto as Commander-in-Chief. The council resulted, as might have been expected, in chaos. M. le Duc, wholly unaccustomed to such opposition, wept tears of rage, and threatened to go back to Paris. As a propitiation, his troops were allowed to form the advance guard, and operations were begun on the following day by a march northwards as far as Pont-à-Vendin. Enghien's first thought, as usual, was how best to take steps for provoking a general action. He marched upon Tournai, secured a passage across the Scheldt, and sent word to Monsieur suggesting preparations for an attack. In answer came an intimation that His Royal Highness had altered the plan of campaign,—if plan it could be called. He had decided on the siege of Courtrai, and an advance along the river Lys, a western tributary of the Scheldt. Enghien's forces were now to fall in as the rear-guard, and to keep watch against possible hindrance from Duke Charles and Piccolomini on the right, or from Caracena on the left. On the route, he was to occupy the fortress of Lannoy, near Lille, which would serve to keep a line open for convoys to the troops before Courtrai.

The prospect of a siege was a poor exchange for that of a pitched battle ; still, the fact that Gaston should have resolved on any definite enterprise was so much to the good, and Courtrai might well prove a useful

acquisition. Enghien carried out his orders promptly and to the letter. Disappointed and humiliated as he was, he could still realise that in his present position there was no advantage to be gained by an open breach of discipline. For his own sake, quite as much as from any public-spirited motive, he wished nothing so much as the success of the campaign ; and to his professional instinct it was evident that the only possible course was to keep on good terms with Monsieur, in the hope of defeating La Rivière on his own ground. The march to re-join the main army, after the occupation of Lannoy, brought him again within sight of the enemy ; but since his own eight or ten thousand men would have been opposed to more than double their number, he was forced to avoid all chance of an engagement.

Courtrai was invested by the night of June 14th ; too late, however, to forestall a reinforcement dispatched by Caracena which had just effected an entrance, under an Italian officer, Delli-Ponti, famed for his knowledge of engineering and siege-works. But for this fortunate stroke, the movements of the Austro-Spanish army were characterised by no more method than those of the French. The fighting qualities of the men of Lorraine were justly held in high repute ; but their services were dearly bought at the price of political or military dealings with their leader. Charles of Lorraine was a perfect specimen of an exasperating type ; a man of great abilities, deliberately posing as an eccentric. " If I had not known him to be a very clever man, I should have taken him for a lunatic ", was Mademoiselle's verdict after one of his brief appearances in Paris. Marie de Gonzague, on her journey into Poland, writes in a more tolerant spirit to Madame la Princesse : " M. de Lorraine went with me part of the way ; he looks so crazy that I cannot help liking him, and his conversation is all disconnected ".¹ Duke Charles was no less erratic in the field than at Court. If he was rash at one moment, he would be obstinately inactive the next ; and that not from any want of courage, but from sheer indifference ; while to any remonstrance he could always oppose the threat of withdrawing himself and his forces from their present service and seeking employment elsewhere. He watched the progress of the siege of Courtrai, and made no

¹ A.C., December 14, 1645.

organised attempt to engage the attacking force ; to the frank astonishment of Enghien and his officers, most of whom were ready to share Gramont's opinion that " no army of nearly thirty thousand men, led by several distinguished commanders, had ever acted with such feebleness and uncertainty ". The efforts for the relief were practically limited to a few skirmishes ; no importance seems to have been attached to them, except by the Abbé de la Rivière, whose unconcealed terrors were a standing source of amusement throughout the whole army. He was even heard to suggest that Monsieur's invaluable life ought not to be exposed to these unceasing dangers, and that it would be well to raise the siege without delay. It was rumoured in the camp that Gassion, who had charge of the section of investment nearest the enemy, took a malicious pleasure in sending pressing appeals for help to the adjoining sections on the slightest provocation, chiefly for the purpose of tormenting La Rivière. It is difficult to believe that a soldier of Gassion's reputation could be guilty of such unprofessional conduct ; still, the fact remained that his demands were arbitrary, and not always justified, and the joke,—if such it was,—more successful than well-judged. Enghien knew well that Gassion's position might become critical at any moment, if Duke Charles were to be roused to action ; and at the outset of the siege he had promised to send help as often as it should be required. Consequently, the summons which perpetually alarmed La Rivière, gave an immense amount of unnecessary work in the section commanded by M. le Duc. No one ever accused Enghien of an undue wish to spare himself, and he was not likely to be careful for the feelings of La Rivière ; but he resented the strain, both on officers and men, of these repeated false alarms, which he attributed to ' gasconisme ' and a love of self-advertisement. He kept his word, and sent reinforcements as long as he had men to spare ; but in revenge he scoffed openly at what he called ' les riens de Gassion ', and the good understanding between him and the Marshal received its first shock.

The garrison of Courtrai, knowing the situation of the Spanish forces, imagined at first that relief would not be long delayed. The Duke of Lorraine's method of warfare had yet to be revealed. On the ninth day

of the siege a definite attempt to pass in a reinforcement was made ; only to be repulsed with considerable loss. Following this reverse, the Spaniards relapsed again into desultory skirmishing ; while the defenders of the town realised by degrees that no further help was to be looked for. The governor, Antonio de Quevedo, sent an envoy to demand terms of M. le Duc, whom he persisted in treating as the real leader of the besieging force ; Enghien, mindful of his resolutions, felt bound to refer him immediately to Monsieur, and negotiations were set on foot. Duke Charles now came forward, and fully justified Mademoiselle's belief in his cleverness. His chief object was to withdraw his forces from their present position ; otherwise, he would be in danger, the moment the French were able to leave Courtrai. He found an easy prey in Gaston, who allowed himself to be kept in uncertainty for some days, before Quevedo's garrison marched out with the honours of war on June 29th ; and meanwhile the Spanish and Lorraine troops seized the opportunity of retreating towards the north. ' If only M. le Duc had been listened to—!' was the complaint of the French officers forced to stand by and see their enemy escape them. Certainly, there was little trace of Enghien's counsels in the dealings over the surrender of Courtrai ; but the relations between the Commander-in-Chief and his Lieutenant-General were, nevertheless, assuming a more hopeful character. Monsieur was gratified by Enghien's deference, and what was even more important, very much entertained by his company, from a social point of view. His Royal Highness, like all indolent persons, liked nothing so well as to be saved from dullness without effort to himself ; and no one was better able to supply this want than M. le Duc, when once he had the mind.

Courtrai was garrisoned, and the fortifications repaired ; and it was not till July 16th that the French army set out northwards, leaving the course of the Lys, and following up the enemy towards Bruges. That march was long remembered as a trial of endurance by all who took part in it. The summer heat of the year 1646 was noted everywhere as exceptional, and the whole army suffered proportionately. Water ran short, and much illness was caused by the men, half-mad with thirst, drinking from the canals. Those in authority would seem to have set no example of con-

sideration for others. Aymar de Chouppes tells how, on one occasion when they camped in a treeless plain, the baggage had been delayed, leaving the two Princes with no shelter but a travelling-carriage, under a blazing sun; and how they no sooner heard that he had been fortunate enough to secure a tent for himself, than they sent to demand the use of it, and turned him out, to fare as he might. The difficulty of managing supplies was increased tenfold; no provisions could be stored, and the younger officers spent their time in foraging the neighbourhood. Chavagnac, serving as one of Enghien's aides-de-camp, was particularly successful, and provided cheese and milk, which M. le Duc declared to be the best he had ever tasted.

The French army had marched from Courtrai in the hope of effecting a junction with a new ally, the Stattholder, Frederick, Prince of Orange, once a soldier of great repute. The Prince was nominally in command of his own troops, and in former years would have proved as efficient a leader as could be wished; but age and illness had weakened his faculties, till he was as little to be depended on as Charles of Lorraine himself. He was alternately swayed by his wife, a German Princess, in sympathy with the Imperialists, and by his son, William of Nassau,¹ who favoured the French alliance. Gramont, condemned to prolonged dealings with the whole family, declared that "the Princess of Orange deprived her husband of any relics of sanity he possessed". The Stattholder's power lay not so much in the value of his help by land, as in the efficiency of his fleet. No strongholds of the Low Countries were more coveted than the coast-towns between Gravelines and Ostend; and these must be impregnable so long as their ports were left open to Spanish supplies. The French fleet was concentrated far away in the Mediterranean, on the coast of the Papal States, and the friendly sea-power at hand, however capricious, must not be alienated. The Stattholder was persuaded into conditions by which he promised help at sea; in return, he demanded the transfer of six thousand men from the French command to his own; and those in authority had no choice but to agree. Even after this transaction was completed, the Dutch forces, instead of joining in the operations before Bruges, retreated again towards the

¹ Afterwards Prince of Orange; father to William III of England.

Scheldt estuary; to the unconcealed disgust of Gramont, Coligny, and other officers temporarily attached to the transferred corps.

The loss of six thousand men, under these circumstances, was not to be lightly ignored. Still, Enghien had begun to feel his influence in the ascendant, and he could not resist one more attempt to bring about the decisive action for which his soul longed. The effort was vain; even he was unequal to the combined task of stimulating Gaston, and at the same time forcing an enemy as crafty as the Duke of Lorraine to meet him against his will. At one moment success seemed almost within reach. La Rivière, paralysed with fear at the thought of a pitched battle, had pleaded illness and refused to leave Courtrai; and in his absence Enghien so wrought upon Monsieur, that he seemed for a short time transformed. Never, so his followers declared, had His Royal Highness been seen so resolute, or in such martial humour. As the French army advanced upon Bruges, news came that the Duke of Lorraine was drawing up his forces in battle order, on the plain before the town. Enghien's hopes rose high; he pressed forward with the advance guard, sending back an urgent message to Gaston to bring up the remaining troops with all possible speed. But Gaston, though his fancy might be roused for an instant, was constitutionally incapable of prompt and sustained action. The messenger—Chavagnac—found him at dinner. "Tell my cousin", he said, "that he can attack whenever he likes. I will be with him immediately". Chavagnac, however, observed no sign of haste in his movements, and was obliged to report this impression to M. le Duc. An attack with the advance guard, unsupported, was clearly out of the question. Enghein waited, consumed with impatience, and knowing that only a ridge of low hills separated him from the enemy. Meanwhile Duke Charles had leisure to repent of his challenge and to withdraw his forces to safety, under the walls of Bruges; so that when at length the French troops reached the plain, they found no enemy to confront them. Enghien, in wrath and disappointment, would not be satisfied without some explanation of these tactics; he disregarded all conventions of his official rank, and set out the following night with a scouting party. A Spanish officer was waylaid, taken

prisoner, and questioned; all without his identifying M. le Duc, whom doubtless he had never seen, and would scarcely expect to find acting as a captain of scouts. In answer to questions, he stated that the Duke of Lorraine had had every intention of giving battle, but had altered his decision on hearing that 'M. d'Enghien' was leading the advance guard in person; with which wholly unsolicited compliment M. le Duc had perforce to be content.

Several days passed in these unprofitable manœuvres. Towards the end of July the French Generals returned to Courtrai, there to mature a scheme for the conquest of the coast towns. Bergues, Furnes, and Mardyck would open the way to that much-disputed prize, the 'maiden city' of Dunkirk; famed alike as a fortress and a seaport, since the days when Count Baldwin of Flanders raised it from the fishing village where St. Éloi had founded the 'Church of the Dunes'. It was on Dunkirk that Enghien's ambitions were now centred, in default of the general action which had escaped him:

"La Rochelle des Pays-bas,
Cette inexorable pucelle,
Eût pour mon Prince des appas
Qui le firent amoureux d'elle".¹

But he prudently forbore to urge the point too soon; more especially since the Abbé de la Rivière had resumed his post on Monsieur's return to Courtrai. The three neighbouring fortresses must in any case be secured without loss of time; otherwise the season would be too far advanced for any further enterprise on a large scale. Bergues, the first to be attacked, offered only forty-eight hours' resistance, and had capitulated before Caracena could march from Ypres to the relief. One vivid impression of the two days' siege is preserved by Aymar de Chouppes, who, with Rantzau, spent the whole of the first night in securing a position at the most advantageous point on the outskirts of the town. The point in question could only be reached by means of a narrow, roughly-paved way, crossing a belt of marsh, and raked by the cannon from the town walls. In the morning Chouppes came with a report of the pro-

¹ Letter in verse on the campaign, sent by the Comte de Bussy-Rabutin to Madame de Sévigné.

ceedings to Monsieur's 'lever', and found the two Princes together. Enghien, hearing what Rantzau's troops had accomplished, and what difficulties they had overcome, declared that he must positively inspect the position for himself; Laval, with a small cavalry escort, was to attend him, and Chouppes would show them the way. Chouppes accordingly conducted him to a point of observation close to the edge of the marsh; but Enghien, bent on a nearer view, first ordered his escort to halt; then dismounted, and set out along the paved way. Laval and Chouppes followed, in no small alarm for him, quite aware that his arrival with an escort, showing him to be a person of consequence, must have been plainly visible from the town. Enghien was clad, for once, as befitted his rank, if not the occasion; he wore a flame-coloured coat embroidered in gold and silver; and as he advanced, against the background of the marsh, no firefly in the dusk could have been more conspicuous than he. The mythologists of the Court might well say that Pallas Athene covered him with her shield; for he followed the path unscathed, in spite of the enemy's repeated discharges of grape and musket shot. The officer in charge of the outer siege-work was hit, in the act of coming forward to receive him. M. le Duc held on his way, inspected every detail of the position, expressed his approval, and returned by the same road that he had come, "saluted in the same manner as before".¹

The surrender of Bergues (July 29th) was followed immediately by the investment of Mardyck. Duke Charles, inconsequent as ever, had suddenly tired of his command; he delegated his authority, both over his own and the Spanish troops, to Beck, and retired to Brussels. Mardyck had been strongly garrisoned, and placed in the charge of a new Governor; Don Fernando de Solis, the defender of Gravelines. Beck, seconded by Caracena, continued the Spanish traditions of war in the Low Countries; his aim was to preserve and strengthen fortified places, rather than to seek action in the field. The Dutch fleet promised by the Stattholder was still in preparation, and while, as at Courtrai, little attempt was made for the relief from without, supplies and reinforcements poured into the town, passing from Dunkirk along the sea-board. Caracena,

¹ Chouppes, *Mémoires*.

seeing the French forces entirely concentrated on the coast, turned westward, and surrounded the fortress of Menin, on the Lys, thus cutting off the direct line of communication with Courtrai. Even without his intervention, the siege of Mardyck proved a test of skill and patience. The fortifications were simple, almost to insignificance, but around them stretched the Dunes ; the rolling waves of loose sand from which Dunkirk takes its name. Here was no cover ; in some places, scarcely foothold ; not one yard of solid earth for the construction of siege-works. Still, the whole army knew that, if Mardyck held out successfully, there would be no chance of reducing Dunkirk ; and the knowledge was stimulating. Trenches were dug and parapets raised, notwithstanding natural difficulties and the repeated sorties of the garrison. The 'petits-mâîtres' revelling in the occasion ; and, more than ever fired by their leader's presence, exposed their lives with untiring zeal and much seeming enjoyment.

August 13th, the eighth day of the siege, was marked by the most determined of these sorties. Bussy-Rabutin, serving in the trenches in Enghien's section of the investment, was that same day entertaining four of his friends at dinner behind a small parapet or 'épaulement' : Beaujeu, lieutenant of M. le Duc's cheveau-legers ; Des Roches, captain of his guards ; Hauterive, one of his aides-de-camp ; and the Comte d'Oroué, a 'volontaire'. They were a cheerful company ; and the six musicians ('les petits violons') who formed part of the Duke's suite, had been lent them as a special favour. Before the first course was ended, came word that the enemy were sallying out from their defences. Bussy at once ordered his own horsemen to mount, and dashed off with them to the head of the trench. Beaujeu followed him ; the other three guests joined M. le Duc, who was hastening up from his quarters. Bussy found the men of the Swiss regiment, who should have been on guard, already driven from their post ; three hundred of the enemy were in the trench, protected by a battalion of Spanish infantry, and vigorously demolishing the earth—or rather sand—works of the besieging force. Half his men he left to engage the infantry at the head of the trench ; with the other half he turned to attack the destroying party in rear, and cut a way through them. Enghien, with his followers,

also in the trench, had attacked in front, and fought through to the rear ; so that Bussy at the close of the fight met him face to face, a sight not easily to be forgotten. " Never ", says Bussy, " can I recall the state in which I found the Prince, without thinking of some picture, where the artist has striven his utmost to represent Mars in battle ! " Enghien was fighting without armour, and on his sword-arm the sleeve of his shirt was steeped in blood ; he was possessed with the fury of combat, and with rage at seeing his cherished earth-works destroyed. Bussy cried out to him, asking if he were wounded, and he called back in answer : " Non, c'est le sang de ces coquins ! "

The trench was cleared ; the Swiss soldiers rallied, and re-occupied their post. Bussy returned to the head of the trench, where the men he had left still held their ground, though their losses had been considerable. The enemy had retired towards the palisade which formed the outermost defence of the town. The small remaining force of Bussy's horsemen had that moment been joined by a group of some half-dozen ' volontaires ', young men of the noblest families in France, whose names, indeed, are so many ' sweet symphonies ' : Charles-Amédée de Savoie, Duc de Nemours ; François de la Rochefoucauld, Prince de Marcillac ;¹ Guy de Laval ; Gaston de Foix ; François de Fiesque, Knight of Malta ; Henri du Plessis de Liancourt, Comte de la Roche-Guyon. Bussy found himself surrounded by them, while each and all implored him, since they had missed the early part of the fight, to lead them, now, to attack the Spanish battalion. Bussy was no coward, but he hesitated ; the Spaniards had retreated in good order, and were drawn up so close under the palisade, that they could only be attacked within range of fire from the walls. But it happened that one of the petitioners came of a princely house ; and when a Prince begged, a gentleman could not refuse. Bussy offered to lead one charge, if M. de Nemours had set his heart on it. Nothing, he was eagerly assured, had ever been more ardently wished for. " Allons, Messieurs, suivez-moi ! "—and the word was given ; the handful of cavalry charged the battalion, and was met by a murderous fire. Laval and Bussy each escaped with the loss of a horse ; La Roche-Guyon,

¹ Afterwards Duc de la Rochefoucauld, author of the *Maximes*.

Fiesque,¹ and Gaston de Foix were killed ; Marcillac and Nemours, wounded. Bussy, for all his outward deference, refers to Nemours' conduct, very justly, as 'playing the fool'. For himself, having rallied his men, he was quite prepared to ward off any further attempt made by the enemy ; but Enghien, thinking that no more need be required of him, sent a special messenger to order him to retire, adding compliments which caused as much pride and joy to the recipient as if he had taken Mardyck. Next day Bussy, still radiant with gratification, was led by the Duke to Monsieur, and heard his own exploits described in glowing terms. " His men were drawn up, under fire, only twenty paces from the enemy ", so Enghien concluded, " and I believe he would be there now, if I had not sent to fetch him ".

Gaston's part in the siege was chiefly confined to the graceful acknowledgment of such services. The fact was being gradually borne in upon him that his present position could no longer be held with any pretence of dignity. He could find no legitimate cause of complaint in Enghien's behaviour towards himself. M. le Duc had consistently obeyed orders ; he had submitted, after the first struggle, to seeing his designs sacrificed and his wishes ignored. Yet Gaston, who was by no means slow-witted, felt increasingly that his own personality was being overwhelmed by Enghien's stronger one ; say or do what he would, it was to M. le Duc that the whole army instinctively turned for guidance. As for La Rivière, he went in daily terror of death ; his life was threatened, not so much by the enemy, as by his own countrymen. The soldiers hated, even more than they despised, him ; they accused him of having instigated the siege, as an enterprise involving no danger to himself ; and they swore to kill him if the Spaniards killed M. le Duc.

Two days after the sortie, Enghien, by an irony of fate, was temporarily disabled through the carelessness of one of his own men. He was superintending work in the trenches when a soldier came past, bearing, after

¹ François de Fiesque is referred to by Mademoiselle de Montpensier as " le plus sage et le plus dévot gentilhomme de la cour ". Madame de Motteville says of him : " Il fut regretté d'une fille de grande naissance ". The lady in question was Mademoiselle d'Épernon, who soon afterwards took the veil.

the casual fashion of his time, his hat, containing a store of powder in one hand, and a lighted fuse in the other. By some accident—probably the man stumbled in his haste—the fuse was dropped into the hat, and the powder exploded. The Duke was so near at the time, that his face was severely burnt, and he narrowly escaped losing his eyesight. For a fortnight he was condemned to a dark room, and bandages; but he never for a single day omitted to give all directions for carrying on the siege-work in his section. Monsieur's jealousy was fired afresh by the distress and anxiety shown in every rank of the army; and La Rivière, fearing lest any injury to the Duke might be visited on him, dared not even pay the conventional call of inquiry without the protection of the Commander-in-Chief and a large retinue. Enghien, chafing in his imprisonment, could still be amused when a contemporary journalist or 'gazetier' sought to glorify his misfortune by giving out that the wound was inflicted by a Spanish grenade; and a sense of humour, quite as much as any regard for truth, made him the first to contradict the report.¹

Towards the end of August, some days before Enghien was able to face the light or the open air, the long-promised Dutch fleet at length made an appearance. The garrison of Mardyck had suffered considerably; and Don Fernando de Solis, seeing the port blockaded, surrendered almost unconditionally. This triumph put the final touch to Monsieur's decision; he could now, with undiminished credit, return to Court and rest serenely on his laurels. Such, at least, was his own opinion; but those of his followers who had any real interest in His Royal Highness' reputation, saw with regret that M. le Duc would now be left in sole command of the crowning achievement of the campaign. They were forced to console themselves with the vain hope that Enghien's injury, and the lateness of the season, might destroy the chance of an attempt on Dunkirk. Mazarin, ever watchful against any symptoms of friendship between Princes, had already written to urge Monsieur's return; ostensibly out of concern for his health. He saw clearly that Gaston, however unwillingly, was falling a prey to Enghien's influence; and the House of Condé was sufficiently powerful, in the Cardinal's eyes, without

¹ Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

having under its control 'a son of France'. Henri de Bourbon, by certain exorbitant claims which he preferred, had lately transgressed more gravely than ever; and all Enghien's prestige was needed to save the family from disgrace. The point just now at issue was once more a question of inheritance. The young Duc de Brézé—Armand de Maillé, brother of the Duchesse d'Enghien—had fallen in the naval action of Orbetello,¹ fought on June 14th. Brézé left no direct heir; and the news of his death was closely followed by a peremptory request from Henri de Bourbon that the little Duc d'Albret, should succeed, not only to his estates, but also to any office held by the dead man which could be considered hereditary. The most coveted of these posts was the honorary one of Lord High Admiral ('Amiral de France, surintendant de la marine'), which had been bestowed on Brézé in his early youth by Richelieu. Mazarin was absolutely determined that this lucrative office should not be snatched from him by the most rapacious of Princes; but he lacked courage to bestow it elsewhere, and withstood, no less firmly, the pressing demands of the Duc de Guise. In the end he advised the Queen to solve the difficulty by reserving the post for herself. Enghien's letters on the subject show unmistakably that he was no less prepared than his father to claim the succession as a right; but, unlike that Prince, when the claim had been rejected, he was withheld, by sheer pride, from proclaiming his grievance abroad. To the messenger who brought the news that the Queen was making the Admiralty appointment her own, he answered "that he was delighted to hear it; for now she would be able to give it to him with all the better grace". Brézé was a young man of intelligence and courage, and Enghien had found him a congenial spirit, little as he had desired to be related to him. A letter written by Girard, the Duke's secretary, testifies to his having shown real personal grief at the loss of his brother-in-law. "Monseigneur le Duc gave every sign of having lost

¹ Orbetello, on the coast of Tuscany, was the chief town of a small territory held in that province by Spain. Brézé had been placed in command of a French fleet sent to blockade the coast of this territory, while a land force besieged Orbetello. The French were victorious over the Spaniards at sea; but the expedition was unsuccessful, owing to the failure of the troops on land.

one who was dear to him; he spoke in that sense to those who are most intimate with him". As for the Queen's refusal, "his prudence and reserve are such that he makes mention of it only to very few. These matters have allowed him little rest after the continual fatigue he has undergone during the siege".¹

Girard's statements, both as to the Duke's grief and as to his reticence, are borne out by other witnesses. But neither practical nor sentimental regrets could divert any great share of Enghien's attention from the work he had in hand. His father was soon driven to remonstrate with him for his want of zeal in urging the family claims, telling him that it was for an affair like this that he might make a disturbance at Court, and not, as he had once done, by chastising Monsieur's servants. Enghien, deeply as he resented Mazarin's action, had no intention of quarrelling openly with the power which controlled his supplies and reinforcements. The French army was much reduced by active service, and by the unhealthy conditions of the country and climate; it would be almost impossible to secure a brilliant close to the campaign without further help. La Ferté, the Duke's subordinate at Rocroy, was ordered up from the Lorraine frontier; Coligny, to his great joy, was allowed to bring back part of the force detached for the Stattholder's service; and English mercenaries were raised and dispatched by a French agent stationed at Greenwich. The Queen of Poland exerted her newly won influence to supply a 'corps d'élite' of her subjects, nearly three thousand strong. Sirot had charge of these valiant, but half-savage warriors, whose barbarous habits caused no small amusement; they camped, not in tents, but in holes, which they dug like rabbits in the sand. With such troops as these, Mardyck and Bergues were garrisoned. Enghien, at the head of the remaining force, found two courses open to him: either to re-take Menin, which would restore a much-needed line of communication with Courtrai; or to besiege Dunkirk. In his own mind there appears to have been no hesitation; Dunkirk was his goal. Gaston had no sooner set his face towards Paris than M. le Duc, barely cured of his wound, was at work on a scheme of preliminary operations.

¹ Girard to Henri, Prince of Condé, *A.C.*, June, 1646.

Bergues and Mardyck, on the east and south, guarded the approaches to Dunkirk ; west, or seawards, the Dutch fleet would blockade the port. Furnes, to the east, was the only point still to be secured. Enghien marched inland from Mardyck to Hondschote, and then turned again towards the coast, describing a semicircle. Gassion was detached to ward off Caracena, whose force, between Furnes and Nieupoort, represented the nearest danger. La Ferté, coming up from Lorraine, stayed to keep watch between Ypres and Menin. North-eastwards, the Stattholder's forces, at the mouth of the Scheldt, made another advance, creating a powerful diversion. This was the first active measure into which Gramont had goaded the Prince of Orange ; he writes piteously to the Duke : " If I were to tell you of all the manœuvres I devised, and all the troubles I have gone through, I should write a book instead of a letter ".¹ Enghien came to Furnes in the early days of September ; skirmishing, now and again, on the march, with Caracena. The town, less valuable as a fortress than as a strategical position, capitulated within a week. While the French troops worked to strengthen the fortifications, Enghien summoned a council of war, and now, for the first time, formally proposed the investment of Dunkirk. As when, at Fribourg, he had suggested closing the campaign by the conquest of the Rhine, his scheme met with opposition, even from his staunchest followers ; Coligny and La Moussaye were among those who pronounced against it ; advising instead, as a final achievement, the capture of Menin. They argued the lateness of the season, the diminished strength of the troops, and advantage of securing, through Menin, the passage of the Lys. But, as at Fribourg, Enghien persisted ; Monsieur and La Rivière were safe in Paris, and he was once more in his element. " It seemed to him ", he said, " a glorious work to carry out an enterprise which had been contemplated since the beginning of the war, but which no one, as yet, had ventured to undertake ". When each member of the council had given his opinion, and a strong majority had declared in favour of the expedition to Menin, M. le Duc gave his own decision ; namely, to proceed with the siege of Dunkirk, subject to the pleasure of the King. La

¹ A.C., 1646.

Moussaye accordingly departed for Paris to submit the scheme for approval; Enghien, who considered this measure as purely formal, did not wait for his return to set active preparation on foot.

Furnes was garrisoned, provisioned, and converted into a French base of supplies. On September 19th, Dunkirk was invested. The zone of investment was divided in two sections : one under the two Marshals, Gassion and Rantzau, and the other under the Duke ; farther from the town, a third force was stationed, to bar the way between Bergues and Mardyck. Enghien, well seconded by his Marshals, went about his task with fierce, untiring energy and determination. Dunkirk had been newly and strongly fortified by the Spaniards during the past five years ; and it was now held by Guillaume de Lede, a Flemish veteran skilled in all the arts of defence. The French army had to contend not only with the garrison and fortifications, but also with the difficulty of conducting siege operations over an open surface of sand and water ; and, lastly, with the elements themselves. The great heat had been followed by an autumn of storm and tempest ; and to the besieging force, encamped with little protection among the sand-hills, it seemed that the rain never ceased to fall, nor the winds to blow. The officers sent to Paris for winter clothes ; the men were forced to endure as best they might, and among the foreign troops desertions were frequent. " Madame is sending you your furred cloak", Dalmas, the Princess's secretary, writes to M. le Duc, " but she hopes that it may not be needed ; that is to say, she hopes that Your Highness will have returned before the cold obliges you to wear it".¹

In the teeth of storms the siege-works were constructed ; the sand artificially strengthened, and overlaid with sods of turf. Along the sea-front, where men or boats might pass, according to the height of the tide, a stockade was planted, with the stakes just separated, to lessen the shock of the waves ; and inland, a still harder task, the dykes were repaired where the Spaniards had broken them, hoping to flood out their enemies. Enghien, in the words of a contemporary, " superintended, as his custom was, all these diverse operations, leaving nothing without his care ;

¹ A.C., 1646.

cheerful and assured in spirit, as his countenance showed",¹ though the mention of more than one hairbreadth escape reached Paris, to destroy the repose of the Hôtel de Condé. In four days' time the trenches were opened, the stockade almost completed, and the dykes secure. Three definite attempts at a relief were made, and repulsed. Beck and Caracena failed to force a passage by Furnes on September 30th. The second attempt was made by sea, at high tide, when the enemy's ships were overwhelmed by the Dutch fleet; and the third, at low water, from the sands. Here the stockade proved its value; the fire from behind it drove back the Spaniards, while the rising tide prevented them from renewing the attack. Yet, in spite of the enemy's greater activity, the losses, as a whole, were less severe than at Mardyck. With Monsieur's departure, a more responsible spirit seemed to have fallen on the army, and though equal courage was shown on all hands, there were fewer instances of sheer foolhardiness. Those who fell, lost their lives, not in sport, but in legitimate enterprise. The later days of the siege were marked, tragically, by the death of two 'damoiseaux', both of the inner circle of Chantilly; one, the son of Madame de Sablé, Guy de Laval, whom some called "as handsome a man as any in France"; the other, Guy-Aldonce de Chabot, youngest of the three Chabot brothers. Of Laval, his friends have recorded that he found it hard to die; he did not fear death, but he regretted life, and felt himself defrauded of long years of happiness. Chabot, mortally wounded, met his end unflinching: "Pour luy", says Sarasin, the first historian of the siege, "il témoigna une grande constance en sa mort; qu'il vit venir avec fierté, et qu'il reçût en la méprisant".

The death of Chabot befell on the very eve of surrender. Guillaume de Lede had prolonged the defence till the end of the first week in October; by which time the besieging force had carried the trenches up to his counterscarp, and were setting to work on mines. The repeated failure of Beck and the Spanish Generals, convinced him that there was no hope of saving the town; but he knew that the French army had no strength to spare, and applied himself in good time to securing favourable terms. On October 7th an

¹ Sarasin, *Histoire du siège de Dunquerque*.

envoy, Don Jacinto de Vera, was sent to parley with the Duke. In the case of immediate surrender, Enghien promised the garrison all the honours of war, and agreed, further, that all prisoners taken during the siege on either side should be returned. These conditions, it must be observed, involved no great sacrifice on the French side; for the safe-conduct and support of prisoners in an enemy's country was at times a heavy charge. If the resistance were prolonged further, these promises would be retracted; the whole garrison should be prisoners, and need expect no mercy. Don Jacinto was believed, by some of Enghien's officers, to have private reasons for wishing to avoid captivity; he was said to have been once before a prisoner in French hands, and to have escaped by breaking his parole. Enghien sent the Comte de Palluau to escort him back to the town, with instructions to frighten him as much as possible on the way, by dwelling on the severe treatment which might be in store for him. Either his eloquence, or the native prudence of the Governor prevailed; the articles of capitulation were signed, and the Spanish garrison marched out of Dunkirk on the morning of October 12th.

Enghien waited outside the gates, and gave the departing Governor a courteous reception. They stood together to see the Spaniards pass out on their way to Nieuport, and the French garrison march in with colours flying; and there were some present who noticed that Guillaume de Lede looked neither at the French nor at the Spanish forces, but kept his eyes fixed on the young man by his side, whom he watched as though fascinated. With the Duke were Rantzau, Gassion, and all his principal officers; Rantzau already cherishing the hope of succeeding Guillaume de Lede as a Governor; Gassion, in a far less satisfied frame of mind. His relations with Enghien had of late become increasingly strained, probably through faults on both sides. M. le Duc was imperious, as only a Prince of his time could be; Gassion, for his part, was apt to forget that three years had passed since Rocroy, and that he was serving, not with an inexperienced youth, but with a commander whose reputation was one of the first in Europe. More than once the Marshal had transgressed in smaller matters of discipline and etiquette; and Enghien's patience, at no time to be much

depended on, was stretched almost to breaking-point. Before they parted, he inquired of Guillaume de Lede whether all the Spanish prisoners had been duly returned ; and was told, to his indignation, that six had been kept back. Who was responsible for this breach of the conditions ? Gassion's name was mentioned, and Enghien then and there peremptorily demanded an explanation. Gassion's answer, not too respectful, was to the effect that he had acted as he thought best. The Duke turned upon him : " Give up your prisoners, M. de Gassion ! When I give an order I mean it to be obeyed ; and you shall obey me, as much as if you were the lowest rascal of a soldier in the army ". The Marshal, if he did not actually retort, was scarcely less angry than his Commander-in-Chief. For the short remainder of the campaign he continued in a state verging on insubordination, but just short of open disobedience. Enghien, as might be expected, did not spare references to the " Gascon corporal, who thinks himself a great man " ; but he never entirely lost sight of Gassion's true worth ; and when the heat of his anger was past he repented, and spoke of him again in terms of high praise. Possibly, in time, their common enthusiasm might have drawn them together once more. But Gassion was not destined to serve another campaign with the Duke ; a year later, at the siege of Lens, he died, as he had lived, fighting. He was buried in Notre-Dame with the pomp due to a Marshal of France ; as splendid in death as he had been uncourtly in life. Richelieu, who held him in great esteem, had once summed up his personality in the fewest words : " Bertrand du Guesclin ; only not quite so ill-looking ".

The fall of Dunkirk was loudly acclaimed in Paris, and was followed by the usual shower of congratulations to M. le Duc. Corneille, in the dedicatory preface to his tragedy of *Rodogune* (published 1646), refers in hyperbolical language to the siege as to the Duke's greatest exploit. " Forgive me, Monseigneur, if I say little to you of Dunkirk ; the powers of imagination are exhausted, and I can find no words adequate to the dignity of that great achievement ; the ancient haunt of pirates is ours, and the command of the seas is assured to us ".

Enghien was forced to spend nearly a month in dis-

posing the final affairs of the campaign ; re-victualling garrisons and providing winter quarters for the troops. This done, he set out in haste for Chantilly. Urgent letters had reached him ; Henri de Bourbon, conscious of failing physical strength, and beset by fears lest any family advantage should escape him, felt more than ever the need of his son's presence and support. The glory of Dunkirk was far from consoling him for the loss of Brézé's appointment ; he must consult with Enghien upon that and other matters, seriously and undisturbed. " My objection to Chantilly (as a meeting-place) ", he writes, " is that so many women are likely to be there, besides others who would disturb our conversation ; but I will do my best to prevent them from coming, and shall look forward with great joy to seeing you ".¹ When M. le Duc arrived at Chantilly on November 11th, his father had only a few weeks to live. To the last, the Prince directed all the affairs of his family and household, down to the minutest detail ; and he died " Christianly, and like a good Catholic ", after bestowing much admirable, and indeed prophetic, advice on his sons and daughter. He begged them never to forget their duty to their King ; there could be no greater misfortune, he added, for a Prince of the Blood, than to set himself in opposition to the throne ; such a one could only end by losing a splendid position, and becoming the slave of his own followers. One great solace was reserved for his last moments. On the day of his death—December 28th—the Duchesse d'Orléans gave birth to her second daughter ; and this news brought an almost religious joy to the dying man, in the certainty that his own son would succeed him, not only in the family honours, but also as ' First Prince of the Blood '. The arbitrary rule which governed the possession of this title was such, that a son born to Monsieur in the lifetime of Henri de Bourbon, would have wrested it from the Prince's heirs. Now, it was safe ; for the title, once held, could only pass at the death of its bearer. Louis II de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, would carry it to the grave.

Few men have been less regretted, for their own sakes, than Henri de Bourbon. Yet there were some far-seeing persons who lamented him ; partly for his loyalty to the Crown, which was unfailing,

¹ A.C., November 8, 1646.

though not disinterested ; and still more for the unique power which he had possessed of controlling the Duke, his son. In that respect the loss was irreparable. M. le Duc had never passed altogether beyond parental authority ; but the upholders of law and order, looking into the immediate future, could find no external influence likely to act as a check on M. le Prince.

PART II

CHAPTER IX

· LERIDA

1647

To the Queen-Regent and her Ministers, Condé, entering upon his inheritance, seemed to stand like the angel of the Scriptures, having a drawn sword in his hand, stretched out over the city. War was his element; the moment he was withdrawn from active service abroad, his very existence became a danger to the State. To Mazarin, in particular, he was an object of acute personal fear and dislike. M. le Prince returned the dislike, with interest; but he feared Mazarin no more than he feared any other living being; and in that respect, was ill-advised. Two superior powers he had owned; his father's, and that of a Bourbon King. Of these, the first had been withdrawn in the course of nature; while the second was in abeyance, so long as the Royal authority was represented by a foreign Regent and her favourite Minister. The idea that he, Condé, a Bourbon, and First Prince of the Blood, should be swayed by any regard for a low-born ecclesiastic, a man whom he knew to be, physically, a coward, appeared to him nothing short of preposterous. Yet if the long duel between them ended, after many years, in the Cardinal's victory, it was largely because the 'Signor Giulio', as Parisians called him, had too much wisdom to despise his enemies. Condé, in military matters a genius, and on most points a man of more than average attainments, still fell a victim to that deadly intellectual anæsthetic, the Bourbon pride of race. He could never, like some of his later kinsfolk, be reduced by it to a state of positive dullness and apathy; but its

effects on such a temperament as his were none the less apparent in an utter want of self-control, and a warped sense of proportion.

Certain passages with his father and with Richelieu, to say nothing of his more recent dealings with Monsieur, show clearly enough that he was well able to rule his own spirit when he chose ; and so long as he was in any sense a dependent, he used this power, from time to time, as a matter of policy. But with the death of the elder Prince even this superficial control vanishes. Condé, believing firmly that the present state of affairs made him answerable to no one, gave himself up more and more to the impulses of the moment ; undermining his hold over himself, and also, just as surely, his power over others. Only his soldier's instinct remained untouched ; stronger than any other influence, for good or evil, from within or without ; at times a guide and a restraint, when all other principles had failed. In private and civil matters the weaker side of his nature came increasingly into play, passionate and unbalanced ; acting on a highly-strung nervous system, which had been overtaxed from childhood. Mazarin noted it ; and learned in time to spread his nets accordingly.

Retz and La Rochefoucauld, observers as shrewd, though less hostile, were equally alive to the Prince's failings, and recorded them impartially. " All heroes ", says the Coadjutor, " have their weak points ; that of M. le Prince was a lack of order and discipline, in one of the finest intellects in the world ".¹ La Rochefoucauld is even more emphatic : " A genius like that of M. le Prince produces great virtues, but also great defects. He was incapable of moderation ; and by the want of it he destroyed all those advantages which nature and good fortune had heaped upon him ; yet if piety, justice, and steadfastness had been joined, in due proportion, to the personal valour, the courage in adversity, and the fine intellectual qualities which were to be observed in him, these same advantages would have won him a reputation more glorious than that of any great man in the past ".²

Among his own near relations, M. le Prince had, so far, no opposition to fear. To the Princess Dowager, he was henceforth less a son than head of their House. Madame de Longueville, dutifully following her husband

¹ Reta, *Mémoires*.

² La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

to Münster, had not yet developed interests apart from those of her family. Armand, Prince of Conti, at seventeen, was still in the hands of his tutors, the Jesuit fathers; a delicate boy, slightly deformed, he gave no promise as a soldier, and had been destined for Holy Orders. Condé and his young brother had not often appeared together in public, but they were both conspicuous figures when the obsequies of Henri de Bourbon were celebrated in Notre-Dame; and the Bishop of Dôle, who pronounced the funeral oration, was inspired by the sight to compare them, prophetically, to pillars of cloud and fire, like those which led the children of Israel; one guiding the Church, and one the State. Two other points were especially noted during that long and imposing ceremony; firstly, the flippant comment made by an observer, that so much needless expense must be causing great annoyance to the departed soul; secondly, the unconcealed elation of the whole Condé faction over their late triumph in securing the title of 'First Prince'. Monsieur, the father of a third daughter, watched enviously when the heir of the House of Condé, the new 'M. le Duc', now three years old, was led forward to take his part and to sprinkle holy water at the lying-in-state.

Condé inherited from his father, besides his princely honours, four ducal titles,—Enghien, Albret, Châteauroux, and Bellegarde; any of which he was free to bestow as he liked on his descendants. The additional title of Duc de Montmorency he assumed in right of his mother, and that of Duc de Fronsac in right of his wife. More profitable, from a practical standpoint, were the various public posts to which he succeeded: the 'Grand Mastership of France', a kind of honorary Lord Chamberlain's office; and the Governorships of Berry, Burgundy, and Bresse. The post of Governor in Champagne and Brie, which he had formerly held, passed to his brother of Conti; and the smaller province of Clermontois had been granted him by the Queen as a compensation for the refusal of the Admiralty appointment. The sight of so much power in the hands of a subject, and that subject M. le Prince, might well be appalling to any Minister. Mazarin had not, as yet, gauged Condé's political weakness; his one thought was how best to find employment for this incarnate spirit of discord, as far as possible from the seat of government. The

Prince, it appears, had already proposed a scheme which would certainly have engrossed all his energies for the time being ; but which, nevertheless, was scarcely likely to be approved by Queen or Cardinal. He suggested nothing less than that he should be given a force strong enough to drive the Imperial troops out of the frontier province of Franche-Comté ; and that this same province should then be handed over to him as an independent sovereignty. Mazarin, mindful of past relations between France and the Duchies of Lorraine and Burgundy, urged the Queen to refuse her consent to any such design. Instead, he offered Condé the high-sounding title, ' Viceroy of Catalonia ' ; together with the command of the French troops beyond the Pyrenees.

' Les Trois Bras ', as they were called,—otherwise the united provinces of Catalonia, Cerdagne, and Roussillon,—had for some time past been a thorn in the side of France. In the year 1640, when Richelieu's power was at its height, these border states had deliberately yielded themselves to the French Crown after a dispute with the Spanish Government over certain privileges of independence. Latterly they had shown discontent under the new rule, and were inclined to offer less resistance to Spanish encroachments on their territory. Roussillon had been definitely conquered for France ; but in Catalonia the Spaniards were gaining ground. Three great fortresses were now in their possession : Tortosa, Lerida, and Tarragona. The last Viceroy, Henri de Lorraine, Comte d'Harcourt, fresh from victories in Piedmont, had opened his reign with success. The Spaniards were beaten at Llorens, and forced to surrender the towns of Flix and Balaguer ; but in November, 1646, Harcourt in his turn was severely defeated before the famous rock-fortress of Lerida ; where another French Commander, La Mothe-Houdancourt, had suffered in like manner four years earlier. Harcourt, till now a favourite of fortune, was plunged by his reverse into deep disfavour at Court. The punishment was scarcely deserved, for Mazarin had, as usual, failed signally to keep his word in the matter of reinforcements ; but the loss of Lerida was a sore point with the French Government, and this second failure was mercilessly censured ; till the unfortunate Viceroy resigned in haste, and returned to Paris, hoping by his presence to protect some shreds of his reputation.

Almost his only defender was M. le Prince, whose respect for his profession rebelled against an injustice done by civilians to a soldier of Harcourt's undoubted worth; and who made use of his new capacity as a member of the Queen-Regent's Council to point out forcibly that many of those who gave their opinion on the subject "had never seen war except in pictures".¹ This discussion took place in December, 1646. A few weeks later it was proposed that Condé himself should be Harcourt's successor. There was much that appealed to him in the suggestion; above all, perhaps, the thought that, though others might fail before Lerida, the conqueror of Dunkirk must surely succeed. The prospect was irresistible; M. le Prince consented, despite the advice of some of his best friends, who were inclined to mistrust any scheme strongly advocated by Mazarin. The news that a Prince of Condé's rank and reputation was to be sent them as Viceroy was hailed with acclamation by the Catalans; and the messenger who brought the first word to Barcelona was rewarded with a gold chain, the gift of the citizens.

The Prince was forced to spend some months in conventional seclusion after his father's death; a time which he employed in disposing all family matters as far as possible to suit his own taste and convenience. One duty of friendship he fulfilled at about this time, in standing godfather to the infant daughter of 'La Palatine'; the same little Princess who, some sixteen years later, became his daughter-in-law.² The Queen of Poland, who stood godmother by proxy, writes to him of "our spiritual alliance, through the baptism of my little niece".³ During the winter M. le Prince reorganised his own household, as well as those of his son and of his brother. Certain changes among his personal suite were by no means for the better. Tourville, whose appointment as 'premier gentilhomme de la chambre' dated from the days of Richelieu, was now dismissed, after five years' faithful service, either as the result of some disagreement, or possibly through failing health; he died shortly afterwards. His successor, the Chevalier de Rivière,—not to be confused with Monsieur's favourite,—was one of those adventurers who might

¹ Bibliothèque de la Haye; Lettres de Wicquefort. See Duc d'Aumale.

² Anne-Marie of Bavaria; married, 1663, Henri-Jules, Duc d'Enghien.

³ A.C., January 7, 1647.

always be found haunting the Court, ready to serve any man of rank and position for payment, and to do any work for him which he was ashamed to do for himself. Rivière had obtained favour with Condé by the usual means; he had fought bravely at Rocroy and elsewhere, and had shown himself equally ready to discuss theology, to compose light satiric verse, or to transact doubtful negotiations with skill and secrecy. He and his master had no illusions respecting each other. Condé needed a tool, with brains and without a conscience, and found Rivière ready to his hand; Rivière needed money, and vanished from the scene when the Prince's fortunes were impaired by the Fronde. The secretaries and confidential agents of the House of Condé, such as Lenet, Girard, and Perrault his brother-in-law, were maintained in their office. It was said that the Princess Dowager ventured to remonstrate in the case of Perrault, whom she mistrusted; but the Prince, finding that he had knowledge enough to be useful, cared for nothing else.

The last weeks of his retirement Condé spent in visiting the estates in Berry and Burgundy, and receiving the oath of fealty, which was still formally pledged by the inhabitants. Before setting out on his Spanish venture, he returned to Paris to take leave of the Queen, and receive a few final instructions. The appearance at Court of M. le Prince, the first subject in the Kingdom next to the Royal Princes, aroused excitement for many reasons. Ever since the episode of Marthe du Vigean had been definitely closed, the most undisguised curiosity had been shown, on all hands, as to the possibility of a successor; and a further stimulus was given by Condé's attitude of ostentatious indifference to 'affairs of the heart'. Madame de Motteville gives a life-like sketch of him as he impressed her at this juncture; with no pretensions to good looks, yet always distinguished by 'a certain pride and greatness' in his air, and by the grace of his figure and movements. But, she adds, he was too thin and haggard to become the deep mourning which he still wore; and to the details of his personal appearance he paid as little attention as ever. Nevertheless, he was an object of the keenest interest to more than one lady of the Court; even Madame de Montbazon, it was rumoured, had made offers

of friendship to Madame de Longueville, in the hope of using the sister's good graces as a stepping-stone to those of the brother. M. le Prince resisted all advances for some time ; but, only a few days before he left Paris, he was seen at Court better dressed than usual—a nine days' wonder, giving rise to a storm of gossip and conjecture. The miracle was found to have been worked by his sudden admiration for a very beautiful girl, Louise de Prie ; called, from her father's title, Mademoiselle de Toussy. For a moment his fancy was caught ; of any deeper feeling, there was no question. While the Prince departed for Spain, the matter was left in the practised hands of the Chevalier de Rivière, who entered on an incredibly sordid dispute with the girl's parents as to what solid advantage they might hope to gain if their daughter should please His Highness. Before they could be satisfied, campaigning had driven all thoughts of Louise de Prie from Condé's mind, and the affair was dropped. No reputation seems to have suffered ; some of the persons concerned had little or none to lose. Mademoiselle de Toussy married, not long afterwards, La Mothe-Houdancourt, Duc de Cardone and Marshal of France ; and played her part as a Duchess with great dignity and circumspection.

The citizens of Barcelona were warned that their new Viceroy would arrive in April. Condé travelled with his usual haste, and without any regard for the elaborate preparations which were being made for a State entry. He rode into the town some days before he was expected, in travelling dress, and with a small escort, to the surprise and disappointment of a people used to the solemn splendour and deliberate methods of Spanish Royalty. This first glimpse of their ruler showed only that he was simply, not to say shabbily, dressed in black ; that he looked very young, very thin, and very untidy ; and there were some among them who exclaimed that here, surely, was nothing but a college student : ' Es un estudiante ! ' Condé was duly informed of the criticism ; and determined, forthwith, to prove that a French Prince, if he thought fit to make a display, was not to be outdone in magnificence by any Spaniard. He organised a tournament, or ' carrousel ', in which his staff and all his principal officers rode in procession ; men and

horses covered with gold embroidery and trappings. As for M. le Prince, his aspect in a suit of cloth of gold, sewn with pearls, so impressed the Catalans that they declared no hero had ever borne his part with a better grace. His followers came in for a share of the general admiration. Coligny, now Duc de Châtillon,¹ was foremost among them, and neither he nor Gramont were at any time figures to be easily overlooked. Least noted of the whole group, by reason of his youth and his small stature, was the Comte de Boutteville, known familiarly as 'le petit François'; who, as the Marshal de Luxembourg was one day to outshine them all, with the exception of Condé himself. Boutteville had many qualities, good and bad, in common with his cousin the Prince, whom he looked on as the greatest of heroes; and it was Condé's insistence which had prevailed on Madame de Boutteville to allow her only son to enrol himself as a 'volontaire' and set out on his first campaign.

The 'carrousel' having achieved its object, Condé was able to give undivided attention to the three courses which now lay open to him, all sanctioned by the French Government. He might choose either the siege of Tarragona on the sea-board; or the siege of Lerida; or a march on Fraga, across the borders of the province, and the invasion of Aragon. All these designs are fully discussed in Condé's correspondence with Le Tellier, the Minister for War. The attack on Tarragona was first considered; and dismissed, owing to the inefficient state of the French fleet in the Mediterranean. The Court Muses had already foretold a great naval victory, by which all Spain was to be subdued:

" Desja je vois cent frégates,
Peintes de nos Fleurs de Lys,
Vers les costes de Calis
Porter ces braves Pirates.
Je les vois dessus nos bords
Exposer tous les trésors
Que l'Ibère aux Indes pille;
Et remorquer les grands corps
Des galions de Séville".²

Unfortunately, these invincible seamen and their frigates existed only in the poet's imagination. The officer nominally in command of the fleet was a boy

¹ His father, the Maréchal-Duc de Châtillon, had died in December, 1646,

² Sarrasin: 'Ode sur la prise de Dunquerque', 1647.

of eighteen, Armand de Vignerot, Duc de Richelieu,¹ lately promoted, through family interest, to the post of 'Général des Galères'. The title, as may be supposed, was purely honorary, and the young Admiral's subordinates acted, for the most part, according to their own good pleasure. The fleet, under their direction, manœuvred uncertainly, sometimes off the Spanish coast, sometimes as far east as Toulon; a state of affairs described by Gramont as 'devilish', since it would be useless to attempt the siege of Tarragona by land unless the blockade of the port could be vigorously undertaken at the same time. Condé, no doubt, was tempted by the prospect of the march on Fraga; for the Spanish forces were concentrating in the plains of Aragon, and there would be reasonable hopes of a pitched battle. On the other hand, the country round Fraga was admitted by the Spaniards themselves to be scarcely better than a desert; there was no sufficient base of supplies on the Catalanian border; and the Prince could not hide from himself the fact that his army, once surrounded by that arid waste, would run great risk of perishing from sheer want. If Lerida could be conquered, and used as a French base of supplies, then an advance into Aragon, and even on Saragossa itself, might be contemplated; therefore it was on Lerida that M. le Prince resolved to direct his first effort.

Writing to Le Tellier on May 1st, Condé estimates the strength of the French infantry at seven thousand. To these were added another three thousand, mustered, with great effort, on the spot, and including some hundreds of recruits, besides the fragments of Harcourt's army. The cavalry numbered about four thousand. The Prince declares himself in despair at having been inactive so long; but the situation in Barcelona called for immediate attention. The stores of ammunition, the provisions, and the artillery which he had been led to expect, were nowhere forthcoming; scarcely any money had been sent him to satisfy the clamorous demands of the troops; and, above all, there was considerable disaffection among the leading citizens to be dealt with. French rule was not proving much more congenial than Spanish; once more their cherished privileges were threatened: "The Catalans,

¹ Great-nephew of the Cardinal,

on the whole, are loyal", wrote the Prince; "they hate the enemy, but they love no one as well as themselves; and it would be highly inexpedient to neglect their interests". It was not till May 8th that the French army, now fourteen thousand strong, at last set forth, marching by Notre-Dame de Montserrat and Cervera, to arrive three days later at Lerida.

Condé, as he took up his position and confronted the rock, felt that the city challenged him from its height, almost like a human opponent; an enemy of whose fame he had long heard, and with whom he, in turn, was come to try his strength. Not only were the failures of La Mothe and Harcourt fresh in his mind, but, true to his reputation as a scholar, he had studied diligently the history of the Roman legions in Spain, and both the *Commentaries* and the *Pharsalia* went with him through the campaign. The rock of Lerida stands out from a mountain slope overlooking the western bank of the Segre River; a magnificent natural fortress, crowned by the citadel. Within the walls was a garrison of four thousand men, commanded by Don Gregorio Brito, a gentleman of the Spanish school, courteous in word, relentless in deed. The city was invested on May 13th, and the zone of investment divided in two sections; that on the right under Gramont; that on the left under the Prince. Nearer the river's bank, Marsin, with a strong detachment, was posted, to guard against the approach of relief. The Segre was bridged, to ensure a line of communication; though the work, with the river in flood, was one of some difficulty. The tracing of the lines was interrupted by an occasional sortie, and also, at intervals, by the enemy's fire. After one such encounter, Brito sent back a French officer who had fallen into his hands, with a message that "though possibly His Highness might not find the taking of Lerida an easy task, yet at least he (Brito) would have the advantage, in which he considered himself supremely honoured, of disputing the victory with the most renowned Prince in Christendom". Further, this mirror of courtesy never omitted, when the fighting had been particularly severe, to send two small negro pages, bearing lemonade and sherbet to the Prince "to refresh him after the fatigues of the day".¹

¹ *Mémoires du Maréchal-Duc de Gramont.*

The trenches on the north side of the town were opened on May 27th, a much-discussed occasion, when Condé is reported to have sent his 'petits violons' to play before the regiment of Champagne, whose men were to begin the work. To open a trench to the sound of violins might, in any case, be considered a frivolous proceeding; judged in the light of after events, it has been since condemned as a wholly unjustifiable piece of bravado. Condé was not, as a rule, guilty of 'fanfaronnade' in military matters; but he was used to being a law unto himself; and if the idea pleased him for the moment, no respect for convention would have prevented his carrying it out. It must be added, however, that neither Bussy, Gramont, nor Chavagnac, all eye-witnesses in describing the opening of the trench, makes any mention of the musicians;¹ though none of the three would have been likely to withhold the incident as discreditable. Other records show that the use of these 'petits violons' in warfare, however inappropriate, was by no means unknown; so it is possible that their presence—if present they were—was more or less justified by custom.

At Lerida, as at Dunkirk, the forces of nature were on the side of the enemy. In Flanders the allies of the Spaniards were the sand, the sea, and the rain; here, in Catalonia, the rock and the sun. For the first week or two there seemed to be a fair prospect of Condé's success. He knew that he was working against time, and that the delay at Barcelona was irreparable; that Lerida, if it was ever to be his, must fall before the summer heats had begun, and before the Spanish General, Aytona, could assemble an army at Fraga to march to its relief. Worst of all, he knew that his hold over part of his own force was uncertain; the Catalanian recruits were half Spanish in their sympathies, and months had passed since they last received payment from the French Government. Still, so far, he had never known failure; and come what might, his own courage and energy were invincible. The work in the trenches went vigorously forward; Marsin, Arnauld, La Moussaye, and the host of the 'petits-mâîtres' relieved each other on guard, and divided their time between fighting and revelry; M. le Prince among the

¹ The statement with regard to 'les petits violons' appears to have been first published in the *Histoire du Prince de Condé*, by Pierre Coste, 1693.

foremost in both pursuits. His section of investment included the ruins of a church, long since disused for any sacred rites ; and it was here that the officers of the regiments guarding the trenches met and made merry. La Vallière,¹ an engineer of repute, and chief director of the siege-works, was one of many who went straight to death from the midst of such a gathering. He was entertaining some half-dozen of his friends,—mostly members of the Prince's staff,—when La Trousse, the officer about to relieve guard, came in for some instructions. Seeing the festivity at its height, he called to La Vallière : “ Finish the bottle, mon camarade,—why should I disturb you ? ” La Vallière, however, knew his duty better, and they went out together. A moment later, one of the servants who had followed them came back, crying out that his master was killed. La Trousse, from sheer carelessness, was in the habit of making his rounds outside the trenches, instead of under cover ; and La Vallière, standing near, and talking to him, had been hit by a shot from the walls. The guests, it was remarked, “ all finished dining as though nothing had happened ” ;² with the exception of one Jumeaux, ‘ *maréchal de bataille* ’, who instantly left the table to go and ask M. le Prince for a post which had been promised to La Vallière shortly before his death.

The day following this misfortune (June 6th), a determined sortie was made by the enemy on Condé's section. As at Mardyck, the Swiss regiments at the head of the trenches gave way and fled ; Arnauld, trying to check the rout, was taken prisoner. The Prince, called from a carouse in Marsin's quarters, came up with Balthazar, a famous Rhenish soldier of fortune, and drove the fugitives back to their post, literally at the point of the sword. Arnauld was rescued and the Spaniards were repulsed ; but Condé, to mark his displeasure, banished the Swiss regiments to the rear of the trenches, where they remained in disgrace till another effort on Brito's part gave them an opportunity of reinstating themselves. This second sortie took place on June 11th ; again the enemy were beaten back, and again both sides suffered heavy losses. At the moment when the alarm was given, Condé had

¹ Brother to the La Vallière who played an indifferent part at Rocroy.

² Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

ridden down to the bridge over the Segre with a small escort, of whom Bussy was one; and a recollection of the lightning speed with which M. le Prince, at the first sound of a musket shot, gave four separate orders to the four officers who were with him, and set off himself towards the head of the trenches, moves the Count to forget all subsequent quarrels and give way to a burst of enthusiasm: "The Prince's talent for warfare passed all imagination; his energy, his presence of mind, his judgment, and his courage, reached the highest point to which these qualities can be carried".¹

The French held their own in hand-to-hand fighting whenever it occurred; but, as most of their officers knew only too well, these encounters were not the most important feature of the siege; and meanwhile, the work in the mines, which was of far more real consequence, advanced but slowly. The task was desperate; all excavations, after the first, had to be made in the bed rock. The increasing heat had helped to cause illness in the camp; no further sum had been forwarded for the men's payment, and the Catalans were deserting by hundreds. On June 5th, Condé had written to Mazarin that the Spaniards were assembling in force at Fraga—"if they come further, we will try and prevent them from beating us". Since then had followed the death of La Vallière; and lastly, the discovery that all mining operations would be met by solid rock. The French troops, weakened by losses in fight as well as through illness and desertions, could not hope to withstand Aytona's attack in their present position. M. le Prince took counsel of no one; he said no word of raising the siege, and not one of his officers dared so much as to mention the word in his hearing; but in his own mind the struggle between the man and the soldier waged fiercely. As a commander in his eighth campaign, he realised plainly enough that the right course was to withdraw from Lerida and prepare to face Aytona before it was too late; but to Condé, the man of twenty-five, indifferent to danger, and hyper-sensitive to defeat and ridicule, it seemed, at that moment, easier to die in the trenches than to make such a public confession of failure.

For some days he still went his usual rounds, giving orders for carrying on the siege-works. On one

¹ Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

occasion he was found in the trenches with a wounded trooper, who had come in under cover with half his foot shot away, asking to have the wound dressed, that he might go back to his post. Physical endurance never appealed in vain to the Prince; he praised the man warmly, ordered him back to his quarters, and saw him provided for. To the last he encouraged the men with hopes of success; but day by day their difficulties increased, and in the end, Condé resigned himself; the soldier triumphed. At daybreak on June 17th, Gramont was sent for by the Prince, who told him, without warning or preamble, that the siege was to be raised. Gramont's feelings were divided between sympathy for M. le Prince, approval of his design, and astonishment at his adoption of it; "having believed", he says, "from previous knowledge of him, that pride would hold him fast, before the town, till he and his army had perished to a man". Marsin and Châtillon were next summoned; and on hearing from the Prince of his resolve, only answered "that they thanked God with all their hearts; they were thoroughly convinced that this was indeed the right course, but had lacked courage to propose it".¹ The momentous order was issued, to the relief and joy of the whole army; and early on the following day the retreat was effected. There were no signs of defeat or haste; no guns or ammunition were abandoned; but the French left their camp before the rock, and took up new quarters some three miles west of Lerida.

Condé had a harder task before him than admitting failure to such devoted followers as Gramont and Châtillon, when he prepared to write a dispatch explaining the situation to Mazarin. No one knew better than M. le Prince the exact degree of satisfaction which the news would bring to a large circle of his acquaintance; to the Houses of Orleans, Guise, and Vendôme, and to the many whom, at other times, his own sarcasms had not spared. The note of mortification in every sentence of the letter is almost disarming in its sincerity: "You will be surprised, after all the hopes I held out to you of the fall of Lerida, to hear that I have raised the siege; you know me well enough to believe that it was not done without grief and vexation, and that in sacrificing my own reputation to the King's service, I was obliged to

¹ *Mémoires du Maréchal-Duc de Gramont.*

make no small effort over myself. I am sending La Moussaye to give you my reasons for acting as I did ; I look to your sense of justice to approve them, and to see that the Queen approves them also ; in any case, I have done what I considered to be my duty. I am confident that your friendship for me will be in no way diminished by what has passed. If the enemy should attempt any further move, we are in a condition to make them repent of it ".¹

This letter, fortunately for the Prince's feelings, reached Mazarin almost at the same moment as the news of Cassin and Rantzau's ill-success in Flanders ; and also of complications in the ' army of the Rhine ', where the Weimarian troops were on the verge of mutiny. From the Peace Congress, now assembled at Münster, came other disquieting tidings ; the Duc de Longueville, as chief representative of France, wrote that the Spanish delegates, encouraged by the present outlook, were inclined to treat his proposals with scorn. Mazarin had never been popular in France with any class of society. All his life he was looked on with suspicion, as an alien ; public opinion was never unwilling to hold him responsible for any national misfortune, and murmurs were growing loud against him. Clearly, it was not the time for him to drive M. le Prince into an open breach of friendship. The letter brought back in answer by La Moussaye, is encouraging in tone ; yet for all the respectful terms, there is a slight shade of patronage. Mazarin confesses his astonishment ; adding, however, " It was a great solace to me in this misfortune that you should have had sufficient command over yourself to foresee others still more serious ; such as the ruin of the whole army, which would have been inevitable had you persisted in the siege. I must admit that, but for such evidence, I should scarcely have thought you capable of relinquishing your own wishes so completely, and, I protest, I honour you more for this achievement than if you had taken the town. You have already given every possible proof of courage and capacity in your profession ; but on this last occasion you have shown no less prudence and zeal for the welfare of the State. . . . It is in adversity, whenever it may befall, that you will learn how truly I am your servant ".²

In conclusion, he strongly urges the Prince against resigning his post as Viceroy. Gramont, not without special intention, had sent word, in a private letter, that M. le Prince thought of returning to France immediately ; and as the Cardinal would have found it hard to lay hands suddenly on an adequate successor, the threat helped to bring him to a conciliatory frame of mind.

Le Tellier's comments on the actual raising of the siege are little more than an echo of Mazarin ; he makes no secret of his disappointment, but confirms the assertion that these " marks of prudence and self-restraint will only serve to increase Your Highness's reputation in the minds of all those who look closely into such matters ".¹ This category, it need scarcely be said, did not include either the House of Orleans or the citizens of Paris. The songs—'les Lérída', as they were called—the lampoons, and the general ridicule were quite as merciless as Condé had expected ; and he was not spared the knowledge of them. Mazarin refers to their persistence, months later, with great show of indignation. One ingenious poet contrived to disparage both the Prince and his father, by recalling Henri de Bourbon's noted ill-success as a commander :

" Ils reviennent, nos guerriers,
Fort peu chargés de lauriers ;
La couronne leur est trop chère,
Lère la lère lanlère,
Lère-la,
A Lérída.
La Victoire a demandé
' Quoi, le Prince de Condé ?
Je l'avais pris pour son père.
Lère, etc.
Quand il a changé de nom,
Il a perdu son renom ;
Pour lui je n'ai rien pu faire '.²
Lère, etc."

Condé, for all his annoyance, joined at last in the laugh against himself, and sent a rhyme on Lerida to his friends ;³ at the same time refusing to allow the protection of his name from insult by a special edict, a suggestion considerably put forward by Mazarin.

¹ *A.C.*, July 7, 1647.

² *Recueil de Maurepas* ; Bibliothèque Impériale.

³ In a rhyming letter, signed by himself, Arnauld, and La Moussaye, and sent to congratulate the Duc and Duchesse de Montausier on the birth of a son. The answer is written by Voiture.

Whatever the Prince may have said in a moment of discouragement, or have sanctioned Gramont's writing as a threat, it does not appear that he ever had any real intention of cutting short the campaign. Such a course, as he well knew, would be both impolitic and unprofessional. On the other hand, he was thoroughly disgusted with his present position, and absolutely determined to retire from it as soon as self-respect would allow. His resignation was formally placed in the Queen's hands, and Mazarin found that a new Viceroy must be chosen ; if not immediately, at least by the end of the campaigning season. Condé, having shot his bolt, applied himself to the task of leaving his command in good order. For twelve days the French troops stayed encamped within sight of Lerida, while the surrounding country was reconnoitred and the neighbouring fortresses inspected and repaired. On July 1st the camp was removed to Borjas, where the Prince established his headquarters for several weeks.

Aytóna's force, newly-assembled, consisted of twelve thousand men, encamped scarcely twenty miles from Lerida, at Fraga. The French were by this time not only inferior in numbers, but exhausted by the labours of the siege and by the heat of the climate ; their strength was also reduced by the necessity of reinforcing such garrisons as Flix and Balaguer. Had the positions of the two Generals been reversed ; had it lain with Condé to take the offensive, a decisive action would not have been long delayed. But Aytóna's movements were dictated by the cautious deliberation which, rightly or wrongly, were then held to be characteristic of his race. Neither he, nor the civil powers who directed him, seem to have favoured the idea of a pitched battle. Mazarin, writing to the Prince (July 22nd), tells how a French spy in the Spanish service has been intercepted, bearing letters from the Prime Minister, Don Luis de Haro, to a private agent at Genoa ; and how these letters contained " a highly important piece of secret intelligence, namely, that the Spaniards are anxious at all costs to avoid a general action ! " On this fact the assertion was probably grounded that King Philip IV never sent a dispatch to Aytóna without adding in his own hand the post-

¹ *Lettres de Mazarin.*

script : "Above all, be careful on no account to engage in battle with that presumptuous young man".¹

Throughout July the Spanish army continued motionless at Fraga. Lerida had been reinforced and provisioned immediately after the raising of the siege, by a special force from Saragossa. Condé, though he would certainly not have refused a definite challenge from Aytona, was well content to give his troops a few weeks' rest ; and also to avoid long marches during the hottest months of the year. For himself, he spent most of his time in scouring the country, paying visits of inspection to every fortified place within reach. Early in August he was detained in camp for several days by illness ; half his officers seem to have been likewise disabled at one time or another, as the natural result of carelessness in a hot climate. Bussy was among the victims, and attributes his own cure to the timely death of Montreuil, the Prince's doctor, who was attending him, " and who ", he says, " would most assuredly have killed me if he had not died himself ; he bled me eight times in three weeks ".² M. le Prince, a less vigorous subject, fared no better, for he was bled five times in a fortnight ; any regrets he felt for Montreuil, who had watched over him since infancy, must have been purely sentimental. Meanwhile, as the troops waited at Borjas, their condition gradually improved ; new recruits were levied, and desertions ceased. Money was still hard to come by ; the Government supplied the smallest possible funds, and Condé did not find it easy to meet the demands which were made on him as Viceroy, as well as his own private expenses. Toulangeon, known at Chantilly as ' Prince d'Amour ', wrote to him proffering a loan ; so much may be inferred from a letter in which the offer is gratefully declined : " Beau prince, if Jean Martin (a well-known money-lender) were not here I would gladly accept your offer, for indeed I am in great want ; but his purse is long enough for me to have no need of yours ; I shall keep that for a last resource, and I know my friends' generosity must not be abused ; so cherish your goodwill towards me for the next occasion ".³

The correspondence, on financial and other matters, between the Prince and Mazarin is a study in polite

¹ Désormeaux.

² Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

³ A.C., August 17, 1647.

hostility. The point which raised the strongest feeling was not concerned with supplies, but with the question of appointing a Governor to the fortress of Flix, the very post which La Vallière should have held, and which the Baron de Jumeaux had made such haste to ask of M. le Prince. Since Jumeaux was an efficient officer as well as a personal friend, Condé granted his request and sent him to Flix, writing at the same time to Mazarin for the confirmation of the appointment. Unfortunately, the Government had another candidate in view ; a certain *Sieur de Sainte-Colombe*, a relation of *Le Tellier's*, and, in Condé's opinion, 'un assez médiocre personnage'. From July to September the discussion is waged in a series of letters ; the Prince growing more and more indignant, Mazarin apologetic, and even obsequious, in word, but still holding his own with a persistence which might have served M. le Prince as a warning for the future. Condé must have given way in the end, for the Queen's interest had been gained for *Sainte-Colombe*. He was spared some humiliation by the death of Jumeaux, which occurred before the first appointment had been formally cancelled ; but Mazarin's treatment of his urgent personal request was an insult he never forgot. It only remained for *Sainte-Colombe* to justify the Prince's estimate of him ; which he did, most effectually, three years later, by surrendering Flix to the Spaniards after the merest pretence of resistance.

With no fleet at Tarragona to support him, no base of supplies to enable him to leave his own borders, and an enemy manifestly unwilling to meet him in the field, Condé had little chance of any brilliant achievement ; and his strength was still too inferior to justify him in making any sacrifice to provoke a general action. Early in October he laid siege to the small mountain fortress of Ager, which surrendered after four days' resistance. The remaining weeks of the campaign were employed in a series of strategic movements, skilful though not sensational, by which he repelled a belated attempt on Aytóna's part to invade Catalonia ; a negative success, which gave him but little consolation for his late failure.

The popular attitude towards Condé's first reverse was the penalty he paid for his early triumphs. After acknowledging the glories of Rocroy, Fribourg, and Nördlingen, there were many who found it just—and

not unpleasant—to speak of the ‘disgrace’ of Lerida. Yet, when all was said, the position in which Condé left the French troops was favourable rather than otherwise. Invasion had been repelled; not an inch of ground had been lost; all garrisons had been reinforced, and all lines of communication assured. From Mazarin’s point of view,—that is, as affording safe and lasting occupation for M. le Prince,—the Catalonian scheme was undeniably a failure. Condé was counting the hours till he could leave his post. Once the campaign was over, he cared little for the future of the province; everything connected with the subject was distasteful to him. Already his successor had been chosen; or rather, two successors, for no one man could be found capable of dealing with both civil and military affairs. Marsin was to be left in command of the troops, while the civil government was to be administered by Michel Mazarin, brother of the Cardinal, and formerly Archbishop of Aix.

On November 7th, Condé took a formal leave of the authorities at Barcelona, and departed, shaking the dust of Catalonia from his feet. He was bound, not for Paris, but for his estates in Burgundy. Neither he nor his friends made any secret of their opinion that Mazarin had deliberately played him false, by withholding supplies during the campaign; and, further, that he had added insult to injury in the matter of Sainte-Colombe’s appointment. It was evident that no pleasure or satisfaction would be gained by returning to Court; and M. le Prince withdrew to Dijon, as Achilles to his tent. He had not long to wait for consolation. The Cardinal, as has been said, had no wish to quarrel openly with the First Prince of the Blood; more especially as he had designs in hand which Condé alone could execute. The French army in Flanders was again in pressing need of generalship; for Gassion and Rantzau, left to themselves, discounted their own merits by rivalry, and the operations of the past six months had resulted in an advantage to the Spanish and Imperial forces. Turenne was occupied on the German frontier, in dealing not merely with the enemy, but also with a revolt of the Weimarian troops. Only the Prince remained. Mazarin, conscious of the public discontent, felt that his own safety depended upon a national success; and was convinced, moreover, that the greatest danger of all

would be to leave M. le Prince to find his own employment. The post of 'Généralissime' to the army of Flanders was offered, and accepted; this time without opposition from Monsieur, whose last campaign had, fortunately, sufficed him. Strengthened by this prospect, the Prince reappeared at Court before the end of the year, and braved the mocking echoes of 'les Lérída':

"Quand il a changé de nom,
Il a perdu son renom".

He was soon to show the world whether he could not throw as much lustre on his new name as on the old.

CHAPTER X

LENS

1648

CONDÉ's return to Paris was well-timed ; he appeared, with a brilliant and distinguished following, just at the moment when the Court was relieved from a pressing anxiety. During the autumn the King had been brought almost to death's door by a severe attack of small-pox. The younger Prince, the little Duc d'Anjou, had been no less seriously ill from a fever ; and for some weeks the Queen-Regent saw the lives of both her children in danger. All eyes were turned on the two Princes next in succession, namely, Gaston d'Orléans and his cousin of Condé ; and the partisans of M. le Prince did not fail to draw comparisons between his attitude on the occasion, and that of Gaston. While the King's illness was at the worst, Condé had held aloof, chiefly, no doubt, from pique over his late failure ; but also, if his supporters were to be believed, from pride and disinterestedness. He had certainly no wish to share the unseemly gaiety of Monsieur, who, it was reported, allowed his friends to drink in private to the health of Gaston 1. Short of actually succeeding his nephew, Monsieur had high hopes of seeing himself supreme as Regent ; for in the event of the King's death the whole scheme of government, as organised at his accession, ceased to exist. The accession of the Duc d'Anjou would mean a new Regency, and that of the Queen—or rather of Mazarin—was not popular enough to be renewed without question. But Louis XIV, even at that early age, was not a monarch to be easily disposed of, and after a short time of suspense his convalescence put an end to all speculations. Gaston saw M. le Prince return to Court, and occupy, as was his wont, a most dis-

proportionate share of public attention ; the 'levers' and receptions of the Hôtel de Condé were far better attended than those at the Palace of the Luxembourg ; while in the Queen's Privy Council it was observed that Condé was listened to "as if no other Prince of the Blood had been in existence". His appointment to the command in Flanders had brought about a brief reconciliation with Mazarin ; and since Monsieur alone was formidable to no one, the Queen began to cherish a vain hope of peace and quietness in the State and in her surroundings. How far she was ignorant of the march of events beyond the Court, may be judged by her optimistic remark to her ladies on New Year's Eve (1647): "She was glad", she said, "to be beginning a new year with the troubles of the past, the failures abroad, and the anxiety of her children's illness all safely behind her".¹

Ten days later there were signs of open insurrection in Paris ; and the Fronde,—young as yet, and unnamed,—had slung its first stone. For months discontent had been growing rife, and the system of taxation unbearable. In the words of a modern French historian, "the monarchy was not, and had never been, able to furnish the means of supporting a great military state".² The revenues sufficed for times of peace, but not for the expenditure of a war which had already lasted several years, and which the delegates at Münster seemed in no haste to bring to a conclusion. Mazarin had under his direction, as superintendent of finances, Michel Particelli d'Emery, a compatriot of his own, a man of notoriously corrupt character. Together they exerted superhuman ingenuity in devising new sources of revenue. Old taxes were revived and new ones invented ; large sums were realised by the sale of public offices, many of which were created, on the spur of the moment, for no other purpose ; and still the claims, on all sides, were unceasing. The great princely houses must bear their share of blame ; foremost among them, those of Orleans and Condé. M. le Prince, with his soldiers unpaid, reiterating his demands to the Ministers, and forced to meet some of the expenses of war from his private purse, may or may not have remembered the sums he was drawing from the public

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

² Lavisse, *Histoire de France*.

funds as the holder of more than one over-paid post. At length, in January, 1648, the limit of endurance was reached. A tax on all house property on the outskirts of Paris was revived from the oblivion into which it had fallen since the days of Henri II, and the burghers of St. Denis rose in revolt. Their grievance was placed in the hands of a deputation of members or 'councillors' of Parliament,¹ who presented themselves at the Palais-Royal and were granted an audience. The Queen was much incensed by their defiant attitude; she even interrupted the formal rebuke which the Chancellor Séguier was addressing to them, and declared that they only made themselves ludicrous by any attempt to restrict the King's authority. But the 'messieurs du Parlement', with the echoes of the English Civil War ringing in their ears, refused to be intimidated. The Ministers realised that the situation was not one to be trifled with, and persuaded the Queen to consent to some modification of the new financial edicts, though at the cost of much discussion and many high words; and a short respite of superficial quiet ensued. The position of the Government was still critical, and its safety, as Mazarin was well aware, depended mainly on the course of the war during the coming campaign. A decisive victory for

¹ The Parliament of Paris had been established by the 'ordonnance' of Philip the Fair (1302) as a judicial court, rather than as a national assembly; a character which it still maintained. The eight chambers of which it now consisted were, in reality, eight courts of law; two 'chambres des requêtes', five 'chambres des enquêtes', and the 'Grand Chambre' or final court of appeal, the highest court of judicature in the kingdom. It was, in no sense, a representative national assembly; the office of 'president' (or judge), originally bestowed by the Crown, had, in many cases, become hereditary, through payment of a fixed annual sum. The 'Grand Chambre' was composed of a 'premier président', nine 'présidents à mortier', four 'maîtres des requêtes' and thirty-seven councillors; besides such 'honorary councillors' as the Princes of the Blood, the peers of France, the members of the Council of State, the Chancellor, the keeper of the seals, and the Archbishop of Paris. Each 'Chambre des Requêtes' consisted of three presidents (or judges) and fifteen councillors; each 'Chambre des Enquêtes' of three presidents and thirty-five councillors. The general assemblies of the eight chambers were held at the Palais de Justice, in the Chambre Saint-Louis; the 'premier président' acting as Speaker. The Parliament was one of the four 'cours souveraines', of which the other three were the 'Grand Conseil', the 'Chambre des Comptes', and the 'Cour des Aides'. The 'Grand Conseil' regulated matters of politics and administration, apart from finance, which was dealt with in the chambers of the 'Comptes' and 'Aides'. The jurisdiction of the Parliament included all questions affecting the right and privileges of the Crown; and it was on this ground that its members now approached the Queen, to protest against the arbitrary revival of taxes and the creation of superfluous offices.

France would force Spain and Austria to the conclusion of peace ; a defeat must mean continuation of the war. Fresh taxation would be inevitable ; and the Cardinal himself would probably be the first victim of any national revolt. Condé on the northern frontier, and Turenne on the Rhine and in Bavaria, held his fate in their hands.

Condé, though he spent the early months of the year chiefly in Paris, did not take much part in the financial crisis, beyond letting it be understood that the Queen might count on his support, if extreme measures should be necessary. The Fronde, in these early stages, appeared to him only as a tedious and somewhat presumptuous demonstration on the part of the lawyers,—‘*les bonnets carrés*’,—who represented the Parliament. He had no taste or aptitude for civil administration, and political economy had not been included in the curriculum of the College of Sainte Marie at Bourges. That winter, the Court was less gay than in former years ; only one ‘*ballet*’ was organised at Shrovetide ; but the Princes, for the most part, found that neither their spirits nor their pleasures were seriously affected. Condé was no more scrupulous in his amusements than in the days when he had drawn parental remonstrance on himself ; but still, two higher interests held him persistently : he was in close relations with the classic writers of the day ; and the study of religion, sceptic as he appeared to be, had kept all its attraction for him.¹ It was during this same month of January, 1648, that a young theological student, Jacques-Bénigne Bossuet by name, a native of Dijon, asked leave to dedicate to M. le Prince the essay, or ‘*thèse*’, on the theme ‘*de Deo uno et trino*’, which he was to prepare for his examination at the College of Navarre, in the University of Paris. The thesis was also to be supported in argument, by the candidate, against a circle of ‘*assaillants*’, before a learned audience. Condé not only accepted the dedication, but, what was far more unusual in such cases, was present at the debate in

¹ Condé’s theological studies were noted in the satires of the time :

“*Le Prince de Condé
Vent toujours avoir son compte ;
En visage qui se démonte :
Tantôt turc ou luthérien,
Tantôt chrétien, tantôt payen—*”

person, with a large suite of attendant gentlemen ; incongruous figures among the crowd of University professors. Such an argument, with Bossuet as 'répondant', could not fail to be memorable ; and the Prince, mindful of the time when he, a scholar of fourteen, had sustained hard-fought encounters with the philosophers of Bourges, could scarcely restrain himself from leaving his place and joining the select band of disputants. From that day may be dated the regard for Bossuet which later ripened into friendship, and became one of the best influences of Condé's later life.

The Queen and the Ministry, that year, were no less anxious than M. le Prince and his 'petits-mâîtres' for the opening of the campaign. Condé passed Easter at Chantilly, and set out for the northern frontier towards the middle of April. His first headquarters were at Arras, and here, soon after his arrival, he received instructions from Mazarin respecting a projected attack on Ypres. The enterprise was not of Condé's choosing ; its first originator was Rantzau, who, since the death of Gassion (October, 1647) had commanded the 'army of Flanders' from his post at Dunkirk. Rantzau had considerable military gifts, but the drawbacks to serving with him had long been notorious. His health and temper were both uncertain ; partly from wounds, the tokens of many fights ; and partly from an inveterate habit of hard drinking. Condé's views were emphatically those of an outspoken contemporary Prince :¹ "What does it matter if a man be drunk, so, when he comes to fight, he can do his work?"—but he could not rely on Rantzau to be ready for work at any given moment ; and the relations between them had not materially altered since the days of the festivity at Dachstein. At Court, however, the German Marshal was something of a favourite ; his known courage, together with an impressive appearance and manner, had stood him in good stead, and he was seldom refused a hearing. It was Rantzau who had convinced Mazarin that the winning of Ypres was all-important ; although, as to the details of the scheme, M. le Prince introduced certain modifications. Ypres lies between Dunkirk and Courtrai ; of which latter place Paluau had lately been appointed Governor.

¹ Prince Rupert ; see Pepys' *Diary*, January 2, 1668.

Rantzau suggested that he and Paluau, drawing from their respective garrisons all the troops that could be spared, should march from opposite directions upon Ypres; and he assured the Cardinal that to their joint force it would be an easy task to take the town by assault, without waiting for further assistance. Paluau agreed, but at the same time sent a messenger to M. le Prince, asking him to make a long detour by Courtrai, and to leave a reinforcement for the garrison. Condé wrote from Arras to express grave doubts of the design. The taking of Ypres by assault appeared to him by no means a certainty; "and if", says the dispatch to Mazarin, "Paluau's and Rantzau's brigades, which are both small, attach themselves to a place of that size and importance, they will soon have the enemy on their hands, with a force much greater than their own. . . . I have written to Paluau, and told him to have the place well reconnoitred, and that if he can make sure of carrying it by assault I will consent to his suggestion, and give the necessary orders as soon as possible; but that if there is to be a siege, I must first advance to some post where I shall be nearer to him than the enemy are at present". Then follows a discussion as to the means of conveying the troops to Courtrai; no easy matter, since the enemy's forces were assembled at Lille, at Tournai, and at Oudenarde. Finally, after much correspondence, the idea of an assault was abandoned, and directions came from the Government that the whole army was to march straight upon Ypres for the siege. By the same authority, Paluau's demand for a reinforcement was refused; it rested with his discretion not to draw too heavily upon his garrison, and to leave the town in a state of defence.

Condé's adversary, the Commander-in-Chief of the Spanish forces and Viceroy of the Netherlands, was the Archduke Leopold of Austria, brother of the reigning Emperor. The rank of an Archduke gave its bearer undisputed claim to the highest command; but Leopold was not without other qualifications, and had won some distinction in the Imperial army on his own merits. The officers serving under him were of all countries and conditions; soldiers of fortune, such as Beck; nobles like the Comte de Buquoy, and the Princes of Ligne and Salm; the Spanish General, Fuensaldagna, whose methods Condé was one day to

know only too well ; Sfondrato, a patrician of Rome ; and the 'Lorrainers', Ligniville and Clinchamp. Duke Charles took no active part in the operations, but his disturbing influence could still be felt ; for there was always the possibility that his troops might rebel against any order not given in his name. The Archduke was preparing to take the field with a force roughly estimated at close on twenty-five thousand men. In the course of the campaign, various detachments were drawn off from the main army for the defence of fortresses ; but the Spaniards, in this respect, suffered far less heavily than the French ; for, as Condé expressed it, " the enemy's towns are defended by the garrison and by the inhabitants ; in our towns, the inhabitants are our mortal foes ". The French invaders were disliked and dreaded throughout the country ; and their garrisons had scarcely less to fear from the disaffected citizens within the walls, than from the enemy's force without.

France was maintaining armies in Germany, Italy, and Catalonia, as well as in the Netherlands ; but the Government, on this occasion, spared no effort ; and Condé, at the siege of Ypres, was in command of twenty-three thousand men, Rantzau's and Paluau's brigades included. His Lieutenant-Generals were : Gramont, in command of the second division ; La Ferté, who had not served with him since Rocroy ; and Antoine d'Aumont de Villequier, brother of that d'Aumont who met death heroically in the Fribourg campaign. Châtillon, Arnauld, and La Moussaye, ' *maréchaux de camp* ', were prominent as ever. Service with M. le Prince had lost none of its attractions, and officers of every grade were at least as numerous as was convenient. In a list which seems endless, two or three names stand out : La Trémoille, Marquis de Noirmoutiers, a kinsman of the Prince, and the pupil of Guébriant and Turenne ; the Marquis de Fors, ' *maréchal de bataille* ', brother of Marthe du Vigean ; and St. Maigrin, her rejected suitor ; one who, it may be added, never forgave his rival. Boutteville had confirmed his cousin's good opinion of him, in spite of adverse circumstances, at Lerida ; and now again followed him, as one of many ' *volontaires* '.

Spring fell late, and on April 29th the Prince writes that the weather is still execrable (' *le plus meschant* '.

du monde'), and the season so backward that forage can scarcely be had. Nevertheless, a week from that date operations had begun in earnest. Condé's first movement, on leaving Arras, was to double back southwards, along the frontier to Péronne, where he joined Gramont and the second division. Both divisions then advanced upon Ypres by slightly different routes, Condé passing to the north of Arras, and Gramont to the south; and both arrived before the town on May 13th, to be joined a few hours later by the forces from Dunkirk and Courtrai. On the last stage of the march, between La Bassée and Ypres, all troops advancing from the frontier followed the same route, for one only was practicable, in the flooded state of the country. The French General's design must have been obvious two or three days before the investment could be effected; and there was some expectation that the enemy might sally out from Lille to an attack. But the Archduke gave no sign of leaving his headquarters till the French were safely encamped. Ypres was rapidly invested; the trenches were opened on May 19th; and on that same day came word that the enemy had given up intention of marching to the relief, and had appeared in force before Courtrai. At first, no great anxiety was felt. Paluau had made repeated assertions, both to the Prince and to Mazarin, as to the efficiency of the force he had left; Le Rasle, the officer in command, had retreated into the citadel, or fortified part of the town, and there was every hope that he would make a brave defence. The siege of Ypres was being vigorously conducted, with good prospect of success; and if Courtrai could hold out for a fortnight, at longest, the Prince would be free to undertake the relief. Three days later it was known that Le Rasle had surrendered and that he and all the garrison were prisoners of war! This reverse was followed by a chorus of recrimination; Paluau was charged with having drawn off more men than could be spared; and Condé, with having been so much bent on the winning of Ypres as to neglect all other claims. There can be no doubt whatever that, in the opinion of M. le Prince, the garrison of Courtrai wanted courage rather than numbers; and he expressed himself on the subject with his usual vehemence. "The defence was so pitiable that neither the town

nor the citadel held out for more than two days", he writes to the Cardinal. "It would have been difficult for you, or for me, to foresee such extraordinary conduct, and I cannot console myself for the loss of our opportunities through this strange faintheartedness!"¹ Gramont declares that such prompt surrender would have been impossible if the defenders had not absolutely lost their heads; and that the citadel, at least, should have been equal to some weeks' resistance. The capitulation of Ypres (May 28th) proved only moderate compensation. The fortress, in itself, was powerful enough; but as a strategic position it was robbed of half its value by the loss of Courtrai; and the joy of the enemy was unabated at having, in the popular expression, taken a town from M. le Prince 'sur la moustache'.

Ypres had scarcely fallen when the inevitable dispute began as to the appointment of a Governor. No amount of experience could reconcile the Prince to Mazarin's habit of keeping all important patronage in his own hands. Condé had chosen Châtillon for the post, and had extracted a conditional promise in his favour before the opening of the campaign; a promise which, as soon as the possession of the town became a certainty, was retracted by the Cardinal in favour of Paluau, "whose misfortune had robbed him of Courtrai". Puységur,² an officer in Rantzau's brigade, kept a vivid recollection of finding himself in the same room with the Prince, when the letter with this answer was given him, and of how His Highness flew into a violent passion against M. le Cardinal, and also against Paluau. The statement is easy of belief, even without the words of the dispatch sent to Mazarin in reply: "I have received your answer to the letter I sent you by M. de Bussy. As for what you tell me of Her Majesty's wish to give the government of Ypres to M. de Paluau, and to set aside M. de Châtillon's claim, I can only say that she is the mistress, and must always dispose as she wishes of any matter in which I have a part; but you may judge of how it affects me, after the promise you made to me before I left Paris. I see that I am never to go through a campaign without some such

¹ A.C., May 1648.

² Jacques de Chastenot, Marquis de Puységur; Maréchal de camp; born 1600; served in the army 1616-60; died 1689.

mortification ; and it is hard treatment to serve as I have served, and yet be unable to do my friends or myself any service. . . . I will tell M. de Paluau that he is to have the command, and he shall be installed immediately, so that he may begin in good time to think of all his requirements, and that the same accident may not befall him here as at Courtrai ".¹ The Cardinal was at least protected by distance ; Paluau, within daily reach of the Prince's comments, may have felt, at times, that his preferment was dearly bought.

Mazarin was the less inclined to conciliate M. le Prince since the news from the German frontier had become more hopeful. Turenne, with the help of the Swedish allies, had defeated the Bavarians at Zusmarshausen on May 17th. Peace seemed to be once more in sight ; and peace, if it could relieve financial troubles, would enable the Cardinal to deal more authoritatively with all turbulent Princes. He was even able to bear with some show of indifference the news that the Duc de Beaufort, ' le roi des halles ', after nearly five years' imprisonment in the Castle of Vincennes, had effected a dramatic escape on Whitsun-Day, June 1st, and was on his way to the Spanish camp. " I think ", wrote Condé, who had a heartfelt and unconcealed contempt for Beaufort's mental gifts, " that if we hear that he has actually joined the enemy, we shall not be very much frightened ".² Their courage was not put to the test ; the Duke remained for some weeks in hiding, and reserved his energies till later, when they could be used to more effect. Beaufort certainly had no great qualities as a General ; but as a leader of sedition he was, in one respect, more formidable to Mazarin than Condé himself, for he was framed to be the idol of public opinion. Condé, if his military reputation should wane, had no store of personal popularity to fall back on, outside the circle of his intimate friends ; a fact which may partly have consoled the Cardinal for such a misfortune as the loss of Courtrai. M. le Prince had enemies elsewhere than at Court ; his were not the genial qualities which could overcome the disapproval of ' messieurs du parlement ' and the resentment of an over-taxed people. During the weeks that followed the siege of Ypres there was much evil spoken of him ; reports were circulated of his scandalous ways of life,

¹ A.C., June 4, 1648.

² *Ibid.*

his ungovernable temper, and his harshness to his subordinates. In the matter of scathing criticism and personal abuse, no doubt his officers condoned much ; partly on account of his rank, but more for the sake of his personality. They might resent the insult of a moment ; but when his anger was past, they seldom withstood any advances he chose to make. Paluau was more than once a victim, and as often forgave the sting. One day, after furiously rating him, the Prince was at a loss how to make amends ; at last he went up to him, and asked his help to fasten a 'casaque' or loose riding-coat. Paluau, who knew that at that moment he might safely take a liberty, did as he was asked, saying : " I see you want to make peace ; well, I have no objection ". Both laughed, and no further apology was needed. But the Prince was not always repentant, and sooner or later his powers of invective cost him many followers, some of whom took an effective revenge by blackening his memory. The majority, with Bussy-Rabutin and St. Évremond,¹ never lose a tone of enthusiasm in speaking of him ; and their own grievances, kept well in view, only make their tributes more eloquent. " My present relations with M. le Prince ", wrote Bussy, when, many years later, he recorded the impressions of his youth, " allow no one to suppose that I would tell lies in his favour ".

Bussy, at the time when Condé referred to him as having carried letters to Mazarin, was engaged in an enterprise, unfortunately timed, which did not increase either his own reputation, or that of the Prince, in the minds of respectable citizens. He had been paying court to the daughter of a good burgher family, a certain Madame de Miramion, whose husband, a councillor of the Parliament, had died, leaving her a widow at sixteen. Bussy had no fortune, and his private character left much to be desired. Madame de Miramion was rich ; her family had no wish to see her married to an adven-

¹ " Quand, d'une affection aujourd' hui peu commune,
Condé, l'on s'attachoit à toi ;
Et qu 'on se faisoit une loi
De suivre ta vertu plutôt que sa fortune,
On trouvoit un charme au devoir ;
Et qui servoit le mieux rencontroit son salaire
Dans l'avantage de bien faire,
Et dans le plaisir de te voir ".

(St. Évremond, " Ode funèbre sur la mort de M. le Prince, 1686 ".)

turer, and refused their encouragement to the match. After some slight hesitation, Bussy allowed himself to be persuaded, by none other than the lady's confessor, that she would consent to an elopement ; like Châtillon, he was to carry off his bride by force, in spite of every appearance of unwillingness on her part. The letter with this suggestion reached him at Ypres ; he took it to the Prince and asked for help, which was given with alacrity. The town was on the point of capitulation ; Bussy should bear the dispatch which was to announce its fall. This pretext would take him to Paris, and, once there, he might take leave of absence for his adventure. Condé further offered his own castle of Bellegarde for a refuge after the elopement. As it proved, no such retreat was needed ; Bussy had been outwitted by the unscrupulous confessor, to whom he had probably paid large sums for his information. The plot was duly laid. Madame de Miramion was driving one day in the forest of St. Cloud, when her carriage was set upon and overturned by a band of armed men ; she herself was made prisoner, placed in another carriage, and driven as far as Launay. But her resistance was quite other than that of Mademoiselle de Boutteville ; she disdained threats and entreaties alike ; and since a fortune, and her official connections, had made her a person of some consequence, it was soon evident that the only wise course was to set her free. Her parents were bent on whatever revenge the law could give them, and Bussy was reduced to a crest-fallen appeal to M. le Prince, confessing that " my affair has not been as successful as I hoped ", and entreating favour and protection : " I need them now, Monseigneur, for the lady's family are pursuing me in her name ". A letter from the Prince put a stop to further proceedings ; but Bussy did not altogether escape his deserts. It was some months before he could be allowed to return to the army, or to show himself in public ; and to miss the later part of that particular campaign was no small punishment, even without the addition of a legal penalty.

Bussy, whatever his faults may have been, was an amusing companion, and as such the Prince no doubt regretted him ; but he had little leisure for entering into his friend's troubles. Condé's official dispatch of June 4th gives to the Government a detailed, and far

from encouraging, report of the situation and of the condition of the troops. He was thoroughly depressed by the loss of Courtrai, which he felt was unjustly laid to his charge; and there were other reasons for a gloomy outlook. The difficulty of maintaining an efficient garrison in every fortified town had increased tenfold: "The garrisons have not been paid", writes the Prince, "and there are desertions every day. . . . I think it well to tell you that all the troops are in a like state, and that if no remedy can be found, it will scarcely be in my power to prevent disbandment. I say nothing of a few small disturbances which I have had to deal with already".¹ Money was also urgently needed to repair the fortifications of the coast-towns and to furnish arms and ammunition, since all necessary supplies were running short; Rantzau, it appeared, had not fulfilled his duties of preparing for the campaign during the past winter. Ypres, at least, might be considered secure; strongly garrisoned, though at considerable loss to the main army; and with the fortifications restored and in good order. The Prince and Rantzau had superintended the work; and, according to Puységur, lost no opportunity of coming into the town from their camp outside the walls. Their object had been not only to inspect bastions and 'demi-lunes', but also to visit the Comtesse de Voistou, a Flemish nobleman's wife, whose beauty had made a deep impression on Puységur himself.

Condé ends his dispatch with a request for instructions as to any further enterprise. With Courtrai, the French had lost their base of operations on the river Lys, and the whole plan of campaign must be altered in consequence. Rantzau proposed a diversion towards the coast and an attack on Ostend, which he undertook to conduct if the Prince would allow him the necessary forces. Neither Condé nor Gramont considered the scheme practicable; although, as Gramont observed, "it looked most beautiful on paper". Mazarin was so far influenced by this appearance, that he gave his consent, and ordered Rantzau to carry out his own design forthwith; another 'mortification' to M. le Prince, whose advice had been distinctly to the contrary. No assistance was withheld from Rantzau; but Condé disclaimed all responsibility beforehand: "I say nothing

¹ A.C., June 4, 1648.

of the Ostend expedition, as M. de Rantzau has charge of it".¹ The attempt was made on June 14th; and failed, as completely as the Prince had foreseen. The troops were to have been landed from surf-boats, so as to attack from the sea-front, but the time of the tides was miscalculated; the enemy were prepared; and, in the repulse, six hundred of the regiment of 'Piémont' were killed or made prisoners. Rantzau himself escaped with difficulty, and returned to Dunkirk. His dealings with Condé were not likely to become more friendly under the circumstances, and the Prince's dispatch of a fortnight later is in the nature of a formal complaint. Rantzau is accused of having made no direct communication to his Commander-in-Chief since the announcement of the failure at Ostend. Condé had sent repeated messages, and had received no answer. Now he learnt, through Paluau, that Rantzau, unless he were immediately reinforced, threatened to abandon the fort of Cnocke (Quénoque), between Ypres and Dunkirk. Sfondrato, in command of the forces detached by the Archduke towards the coast, would be prompt to seize every advantage; and once Cnocke was lost, Ypres would be in imminent danger. Considering what troops had already been granted to Rantzau, and the corresponding strength of Sfondrato's force, only 'une paresse extraordinaire', in Condé's opinion, could make the holding of Cnocke impossible. He himself has advanced 7000 fr. of his own money for the repair of the fortifications, and has instructed his Generals to raise further supplies in his name: "I am not in the habit of writing in such a manner", he concludes; "but I see there is no help for it, and I must do it for my own relief".²

Cnocke was held; but Condé requested that for the present all instructions to the coast forces might be sent direct from the Court to the commanding officer on the spot. Rantzau had been granted two thoroughly efficient subordinates, Castelnau and Puységur; with their help, and with his own undoubted experience and capacity, he might fairly be expected to undertake all responsibility for the defence of Bergues, Furnes, and Dunkirk. As for the Prince, the work of guarding the frontier, and keeping the Archduke in check, not only absorbed his energies, but led him so far inland that

¹ A.C., Condé to Mazarin, June 4, 1648.

² A.C., June 29, 1648.

orders could not be transmitted without grave loss of time. The Archduke, after three weeks of inaction, had resumed operations towards the middle of June. He knew that the strength of the French army was greatly reduced ; he knew, too, that all Paris was in a ferment, and the Queen and her Ministers at the end of their resources. Like Melo before Rocroy, he felt that no time could be more propitious for invasion. He had been lured on to this design all through the winter months by a band of French conspirators, the remnant of the ' Importants ', who, in their exile, had established themselves at Liège. Their leader was Madame de Chevreuse,¹ renowned for her intrigues at the Court of Louis XIII ; a siren whose representations might have influenced a stronger character than that of Leopold. She it was who had persuaded him—and presumably herself also—that the Duc de Longueville and other great nobles, out of sheer opposition to Mazarin, would welcome the invader, and that the gates of the frontier towns would be thrown open to him. Filled with these hopes, the Archduke drew off from Courtrai, marching south towards Péronne. M. le Prince gathered up his forces and followed. The Spanish army was before Le Catelet on June 19th, preparing to seize the town as a preliminary to the investment of St. Quentin ; but at the news of Condé's approach Leopold ordered a retreat towards Landrecies, and took up a strong position on the outskirts of the Forest of Mormal. The French were at Le Catelet on June 25th. Between the two armies stretched the open plains where a pitched battle could be fought, and the issue of a campaign decided in a day. The Archduke's force was superior both in numbers and in artillery ; and Mazarin no sooner realised what the temptation of Condé's present position would be, than he wrote to implore caution : " I conjure you, Monsieur, to bear in mind what I have already had the honour of representing to you, namely, that on this occasion we have more need of the effects of your prudence than of your courage ". The Prince answers, with some impatience, that it will be easy enough to avoid an engagement if the enemy undertake nothing ; but that he would be glad to know what Her Majesty would wish him to do in the case of an attack on Guise,

¹ Marie de Rohan-Montbazon ; born 1600 ; married, first, Charles d'Albert, Duc de Luynes ; second, Claude de Lorraine, Duc de Chevreuse.

La Bassée, Béthune, or any other of those towns which, being situated in the plain, could not be relieved without risk of a general action. Mazarin was, fortunately, not called on to make the decision, for the Archduke was by this time convinced that he had put too much faith in the promises of Madame de Chevreuse, and that, if he was to reach Paris, it would only be by fighting his way there. Each fortress seemed prepared for resistance; while Condé was ready to intercept his march along the valley of the Oise. After several days' hesitation, the plan of invasion was abandoned, or at least postponed; and on July 13th it was known in the French camp that the Spaniards had turned again to the north-west, in the direction of Lille.

Condé's answering tactics were to follow the enemy as closely as possible, with the object of keeping watch over their movements, without allowing himself to be drawn into a general engagement. He had every intention of meeting the Archduke in the field before the end of the campaign; but not before he had secured certain reinforcements, which, with Mazarin's consent, might soon be within reach. Erlach, the Swiss Governor of Brisach,—known to M. le Prince from his share in the Fribourg campaign,—was advancing through Alsace with four thousand of the Weimarian army, still faithful to France. Condé was determined that this valuable contingent should join his much-diminished force; but Erlach, whose former position as General of the army of Weimar had fostered independent habits, preferred service on the German frontier. Mazarin hesitated to send him an order which might be unwelcome, for fear of losing his support altogether; and had only, so far, ventured to suggest that he should create a diversion by continuing his advance into Luxembourg. Meanwhile the condition of the French troops went from bad to worse, and the stream of deserters was unchecked. Condé's appeals grow desperate. Five hundred 'pistoles' have been sent from his private purse to Paluau at Ypres; and the same sum to the 'Mazarin' dragoon regiment, "whose officers and men would otherwise be dying of hunger". To Le Tellier he writes begging him to "make M. le Cardinal and Messieurs du Conseil understand that, in the case of further delay, nothing will remain to us but to discharge cavalry and infantry alike".¹

¹ Dépôt de la Guerre; see Duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*,

Mazarin was indeed in great straits ; he knew the necessity for sending funds nearly as well as the Prince himself, and the difficulty of raising them, a good deal better. Turenne's success at Zusmarshausen had not been followed up by any fresh conquests, and the Imperialists seemed prepared to carry on the struggle indefinitely. Further taxation was impossible, and the attitude of the Parliament became daily more threatening. By an Edict of Union, passed in May, the four 'Sovereign Courts' had bound themselves together, on their own initiative, into a single Chamber, for discussing the reform of their State ; the appointed delegates continued to meet and to deliberate, in open defiance of the Royal decree which forbade their assemblies. Such was the pass to which the Cardinal was reduced that he appears, from their correspondence, to have actually invited Condé's return to Paris, on a flying visit, that they might discuss the situation. Gramont had already paid one such visit, and was supposed, in some quarters, to have put forward the idea, by the Prince's order ; but whoever was its originator, it is clear that Mazarin rather welcomed the possibility than otherwise. His letter reached Condé at Le Catelet at the same time as the news of the Archduke's march from Landrecies. The French were to follow a parallel line of march ; but, in order to keep the necessary distance, they were not to leave their present quarters till July 20th. For a few days, at least, an encounter would be impossible ; M. le Prince might reach Paris, urge his request for Erlach's troops with the Cardinal, and rejoin the army on the march before his presence could be necessary. Leaving Le Catelet on July 17th, he made the journey in forty-eight hours ; and, till he was almost at the city gates, Mazarin alone had news of his coming. Monsieur made this sudden arrival the cause of one of his outbursts of jealousy. Why, he demanded, should M. le Prince be asked to give his opinion on the crisis ? What right had a Commander-in-Chief to leave his post without an order from the Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom ? But the Queen, duly prepared by her Minister, received her cousin with smiles and marked graciousness ; so that his triumph was as evident as Monsieur's wrath. From the conference that followed, all were excluded save the Queen, the

Prince, and Mazarin. Two days later, Condé was on his return journey to the frontier ; and by July 27th orders had been issued to Erlach, which he found it well to obey. There was to be no further question of a diversion in Luxembourg ; he was to turn westwards from Metz and direct his march on Marle and Guise.

Condé rejoined his army, a few miles north of Arras, on July 24th. His next camp was between Béthune and Hinges ; and here, with what patience he could muster, he waited the approach of Erlach and the Weimarians. An order had been dispatched ; but the Cardinal's promise was no guarantee, and he showed symptoms, now and again, of reverting to his first intention. The main body of the Spaniards was at Warneton, some twenty miles northwards, only withheld by Condé's presence from a descent upon Ypres. Matters stood thus, when, on July 29th, word came from the coast that Sfondrato had laid siege to Furnes. Contrary to the general expectation, M. le Prince made not a movement for its relief. His obvious excuse for inaction was that, between Béthune and Furnes, the whole country was intersected with canals or 'watregans' ; he would have been forced to make a circuitous march, and it was not likely that he could cover the distance in time. But there were other reasons, less apparent. As Erlach's contingent drew near, Condé's whole being concentrated itself on the fixed resolve of meeting the Archduke in a decisive action. Even setting personal inclination aside, what signified one fortress, more or less, compared to all that a victory, at that moment, would mean to France ? Furnes, if it were to be saved at all, must be saved by Rantzau ; for what other purpose had he been provided with a force that could ill be spared ? A march of the main army towards the coast would have delayed the meeting with Erlach, and left the enemy at Warneton unchecked. Therefore, despite suggestions, the Prince continued in the neighbourhood of Béthune. Rantzau displayed no great energy, and Furnes capitulated on August 2nd. Condé wrote to Mazarin, exonerating Du Bosquet, the Governor of Furnes, from all blame ; and to Erlach, urging him to hasten his march.

The taking of Furnes was the enemy's second success since the opening of the campaign. Any loss,

at such a moment, was felt by the Court to be a calamity, and the tidings were met with great lamentation. The Spanish triumph was proportionate; Leopold turned his thoughts again towards invasion, and let the report circulate that he was now searching in vain for any opposing force; that he had been anxious at every point to meet his enemy in the field, but that Condé had invariably retreated before him. Some such announcement, appearing in the *Gazette d'Anvers*, spread grief and rage among the officers in the French camp, but the Prince advised them not to distress themselves. The enemy, he said, would find him quite soon enough; and they would see whether he or the Archduke were most afraid of the other. One encouraging voice reached Mazarin in Paris; namely, that of Turenne, who steadily declared his conviction that the campaign would not close without some signal success for the army of Flanders.

By August 9th, Erlach was at Ribemont on the Oise, and there received a further message from M. le Prince. Two days later the Archduke began his advance southwards with an attack on the small fortress of Estaires, ten or fifteen miles from Béthune. Condé marched from Hinges, with an advance guard, but was too late to save the place, which surrendered in twenty-four hours, and he fell back upon Merville, to rejoin Gramont and the remaining troops. On the 14th, Erlach was at Arras; Vaubecour, 'maréchal de camp', set out from Béthune with a small detachment to meet him, and keep the way clear. Condé, counting the hours, still resisted the enemy's challenge; the two armies manœuvred, backwards and forwards between the Lawe and Lys rivers. One brisk skirmish took place, when Châtillon gained an advantage over the Comte de Buquoy. Then at length, on the morning of August 16th, Erlach was in Béthune with his force; the numbers—three thousand five hundred—something short of what had been expected; but the men, 'fort bons et fort lestes'.

The three days that follow have the tension of a duellist's pause after the first crossing of swords. Condé was now at the head of sixteen thousand men; the enemy's force, like his own, had suffered losses, but he was still out-numbered by at least two thousand. Six battalions of French infantry had been dispatched

westwards, immediately on Erlach's arrival, to satisfy Rantzau's persistent cry for help ; and four more to strengthen the defence of the frontier between Guise and Rocroy. The French Generals were likely to need all their resources ; for three months campaigning, in a dearth of supplies, had told heavily on the troops. They were ill-fed and, many of them, literally in rags ; worse than all, there was some reason to fear that the fighting spirit of the men had suffered with the rest of their equipment. The officers, fortunately, were ardent as ever ; and if provocation had been needed, the *Gazette d'Anvers* would have supplied it with great success.

Condé's first offensive movement, after the junction with Erlach, was the retaking of Estaires by assault (August 18th) ; partly for the sake of its strategic importance, and partly, as it was freely recognised, for his own private and personal satisfaction, lest the phrase 'sur la moustache' should be heard again. The enemy had been last sighted on the road to La Bassée ; and on the night of August 17th the Governor of that fortress sent word that the whole Spanish force had passed by Pont-à-Vendin and was marching on Lens. The Archduke, hearing news of the Weimarians, and knowing that the long-expected action would not be delayed, was making all haste to choose his position. Condé received the message early on the 18th, just after the fall of Estaires ; he left orders with Gramont to take the road to La Bassée with the troops, and pushed forward himself, with a small escort, to make a reconnaissance. His chief fear was that the Archduke, possessed by the idea of invasion, might be holding on his march southwards, instead of awaiting him in the plain of Lens. But he was soon reassured. Just beyond La Bassée, forty squadrons of Spanish cavalry were sighted on the rising ground near Lens ; and, when the Prince saw before him the enemy and the open plain, every grievance, every vexation of the past months vanished in that moment of joy.

By the evening he had returned to La Bassée to join the troops ; and from there issued the order of battle. His own post was on the right, where seventeen squadrons were to be drawn up : nine under Villequier in first line ; eight under Noirmoutiers in second. On the left, Gramont commanded sixteen squadrons, also in two lines : the first nine led by La Ferté ; the remain-

ing seven by Le Plessis-Bellièvre, Governor of La Bassée, who had brought the greater part of his garrison into the field. The 'maréchaux de camp' and 'de bataille' were distributed on the wings: on the right, Arnould, Fors, and La Moussaye; on the left, among others, St. Maigrin, and Lainville, a soldier of Rocroy, Fribourg, and Nördlingen. Châtillon had command of the centre, which was to be drawn up as follows: in the first line, seven infantry battalions, with the artillery posted in front of the intervals between them. In the second line, five infantry battalions, and between these two lines, six squadrons of the 'gendarmes'. In the rear, Erlach was to hold six squadrons of the 'cavalry of Alsace' in reserve. The Prince issued three special instructions to the troops, with a view to the fact that the engagement must be fought in the open. They were to observe each other's march, so as to keep their line and distance with perfect exactness; to advance to the attack at a slow pace; and to let the enemy fire first. The first two orders were to guard against that besetting temptation of the French officer, to which La Ferté had fallen a victim at Rocroy; the hasty impulse, which gave the word to charge at too great a distance, and destroyed the shock of the attack. The firing orders were in accordance with the range and character of the seventeenth-century musket and pistol. The loading of one of these weapons was the work of several minutes; and the side that fired first ran the risk of being taken at a disadvantage by the enemy's charge, before the men had time to reload.

The fortress of Lens stood on high ground, five or six miles across the plain from La Bassée. The garrison—an insignificant force—had surrendered at the first summons, and the place was already in the enemy's hands. The fortifications, in themselves, were of little value, but they served to form part of a strong position. Beneath the walls were stationed the troops of the Spanish right; twenty-seven 'free companies' of Flemish cuirassiers, under Buquoy and the Prince de Ligne. The fighting line stretched along the gradual ascent which rose from Lens to above the village of Liévain. In the centre, where the Archduke himself had taken up his post, Beck was at the head of twelve infantry battalions; and Fuensaldagna had fifteen squadrons in readiness to support him. On the left,

the Prince de Salm commanded twenty squadrons, including the famous light-horsemen of Lorraine, with their own Generals, Ligniville and Clinchamp. The artillery was a formidable array of thirty-eight guns, distributed along the heights. At the foot of the slope a small river, the 'ruisseau de Lens', wound its way through swamps; the ground beyond, excepting for a space below Liévin, was uneven, and intersected by lanes and high hedges.

Such was the position in which M. le Prince found the enemy confronting him when his army drew out



from La Bassée on the morning of August 19th. At Fribourg, and again at Nördlingen, he had not hesitated to attack forces even more strongly posted; but in each case his own force had been equal, if not superior; and even so, he had paid heavily for a qualified success. Here, he knew himself out-numbered; he was determined to fight; but he was equally determined that the action should take place in the plain, and not on the slopes. The French army halted, in full order of battle, not more than a mile and a half from the enemy; and there waited, while the position

was observed, and its strength estimated. There was some skirmishing between scouting-parties, and the artillery exchanged fire at intervals; but Leopold's alleged eagerness to meet the Prince did not seem likely to make him leave the heights. Condé was prepared to wait the enemy's pleasure for some hours; he had made ready in every detail for the coming action; and it was reported that this tried commander, being still young in years, spent the afternoon in playing school-boy games with his officers, in an orchard. But as the day wore on, certain difficulties presented themselves. The plain afforded little or no shelter, and the heat was unbearable; forage was scarce, and the horses could not, by any possibility, be fed or watered. Before night, a new decision had been arrived at; a camp was to be established at Nœux, seven miles on the road to Béthune. All necessary provisions would be found there, and the enemy could still be observed; any movement on the part of the Archduke would be met by a prompt attack.

So far, the advantages of the scheme were self-evident; but Condé intended that the march to Nœux should serve another purpose as well. His course of action, and the motives which determined it, have given rise to some discussion; but they are clearly stated in the official *Relation*, of which two manuscript copies are preserved:¹ "M. le Prince, having resolved to shift his ground, debated whether to carry out his design by day or by night. To march by night was the safer course. To march by day was incomparably more worthy of a great prince, and gave him every hope that the enemy would follow him, and that he would be able to engage them. This falling back, in full daylight, before the army of Spain, whose commanders were among the bravest in Europe, was indeed a perilous undertaking. There seemed but a step from such a retreat to defeat and flight. But honour, and the hope of a general engagement, prevailed; he resolved not to march till day".² Gramont, who must certainly have been in the Prince's confidence,

¹ Duplicate copies are preserved in the Dépôt de la Guerre and in the Bibliothèque Nationale.

² Montglat, in his *Mémoires* (14th campaign), omits to give these reasons, and one or two historians, following his example, speak of this manœuvre merely as a retreat.

states that he deliberately chose daylight for his manœuvres, "wishing to show the enemy his readiness to fight, and that he had no fear of them".

Condé was not likely to speak of his reasons to anyone save Gramont and one or two intimates ; for the Archduke's spies were on every hand ; and the orders issued that the troops should bivouac that night in the plain, no doubt caused some astonishment among his officers. At daylight the march began. Erlach's reserve led, passing to the right, in rear of the centre and right wing. The troops from the left and centre were next withdrawn ; and the rear was brought up by the right wing, which covered the movement. Châtillon, with the cavalry of the centre, was to be ready to support the rear-guard. If the Archduke should accept the challenge, and show signs of making a general advance, the whole army was to be ready to face about and receive him.

The news that M. le Prince was on the march was not long in reaching the Archduke's camp. Looking down on to the plain, in the clear light of morning, the Spanish Generals saw to their amazement the French army defiantly executing a flank march in full view of the enemy, little more than a mile away. But Leopold was too cautious a man to yield at once to temptation. Instead of giving the word to prepare immediately for action, he merely ordered the cavalry of his left wing to engage the French rear-guard. From the plain, no general advance was observed, and the greater part of the French troops held on their route towards Nœux. At first, only a few squadrons of the enemy's Croat light-horsemen appeared, and the regiment 'Son Altesse Royale', which brought up the rear, was ordered to meet them. Then the foremost of Ligniville's squadrons came up, and charged ; 'Son Altesse Royale' gave way ; and now the Lorraine cavalry began to pour down the hillside. Condé, riding with the main body of the rear-guard, signalled to Châtillon to attack, and himself ordered the eight squadrons that were with him to face about in support. Châtillon's charge drove the enemy's horsemen back half-way up the slope ; but Ligniville rallied them, as fresh squadrons came on, and bore down again upon the 'gendarmes', scattering them to right and left. Condé, in the plain, exhorted his

squadrons to hold their ground ; but a panic seized them, like that which had possessed Gramont's troops at Nördlingen ; and not even the Prince could prevail against it. At the sight of the broken ranks of the men-at-arms, and the sweeping advance of the Lorraine cavalry, they turned and fled ; fled hopelessly and indefensibly. Condé, deserted—furious, but for the moment, helpless—was forced to fly with them. He was the last to turn ; it was well for him that he delayed no longer, and that he had a good horse ; another instant's hesitation, and he would have been led a prisoner to the Archduke.

Ligniville might well be encouraged by his success ; but though one column of French cavalry had been routed, there could be no question of pressing the pursuit. Already the whole main body of the French army had acted on their instructions, and, at the first sign of a serious engagement, had drawn up in battle order, facing towards Lens. Châtillon was rallying the 'gendarmes'. Only a ridge separated Condé from the main body, when at last he brought the fugitives to a halt. Ligniville, unseen by the French troops, and himself fearing what the ridge might conceal, drew back, and waited for the Archduke's advance.

Gramont, from his post on the left, rode up in haste to join the Prince, whom he found in a white heat of rage at the behaviour of his troops, but with a head none the less clear for his plan of action. That the enemy should still refuse to give battle, was incredible ; so much advantage, at least, had been gained by the morning's humiliation. The order of battle drawn up at La Bassée was still to be maintained, with one exception. The delinquent squadrons had been rallied ; but these troops were too much unnerved to be exposed, as before, in the first line. Condé directed that they should change places with the squadrons of the second line, who would thus bear the brunt of the first attack. Every moment was precious ; but the change was effected by what is described as 'a kind of counter-march', carried out with admirable quickness and precision. The men-at-arms were re-established at their post in the centre, and the special instructions with regard to marching and attacking in line were repeated. Each man was in his place when the enemy's

infantry was seen advancing down the slope to where Ligniville waited in the plain. The Archduke's prudence had been overcome by Beck's assurances that half the French forces were already in flight; that their army was reduced, through privations, to a state unfit for action; and that he need only attack to make his victory secure. M. le Prince, for his part, felt that satisfaction was at hand. He rode once along the lines, and addressed the troops briefly and to the point: "My friends", he said, "pluck up your courage. You will all have to fight to-day; there will be no use in turning back, for I promise you that all shall serve alike; the brave men of their own free will, and the cowards because there will be no escape". Though the words were stern, the manner must have been reassuring, for the speech was received with shouts of enthusiasm; some drew their swords; others waved their hats and threw them in the air; "and even those", it was observed, "whose clothes were falling in rags about them, bore themselves more proudly than any Spaniards". Gramont was at the Prince's side during the inspection; when it was over, they took an affectionate leave of one another, and returned each to his post.

Beginning at daybreak, the march, the skirmish, and the incidents that followed, had occupied about four hours. It was eight o'clock when the French army, in magnificent order, advanced across the plain to the sound of drums and trumpets. The Spaniards came on at a quicker pace, their troops disposed in the same order as on the heights. The Spanish line was less regular than that of the French; the left wing, of which the Lorrainers now formed the second line, being slightly in advance. The artillery, on both sides, was already in action, and the opposing forces were within thirty yards of each other, when three shots were fired on the Spanish left; where, leading the first line, the Prince de Salm faced the squadrons under Condé's direct command. At the same instant M. le Prince gave the word to halt, and renewed his order to the troops to let the enemy fire first. This time there was no sign of wavering; each French squadron stood like a rock. There was a moment's pause; Salm, too, had halted, and seemed to be waiting an attack; but still Condé, a tense and silent figure, held his troops motionless. Then the foremost ranks

of the Spaniards fired; the French answered; and before the enemy could recover themselves, the Prince raised his sword for a signal, and led the charge. Salm's horsemen were borne down and scattered. Condé ordered up Noirmoutiers, with the second line, to meet Ligniville's troops as they advanced to cover Salm's defeat. For the next hour the struggle was desperate. The Lorrainers fought with such fury, that before Noirmoutiers came up, the French had lost their advantage at one or two points, and Villequier and La Moussaye had been taken prisoners. Part of the Spanish reserve was called up, and on the French side a message was dispatched to summon Erlach. Condé, in the thickest of the fight, had reached that state of inspired energy which his followers looked on as almost superhuman. Each squadron, threatening to give way, found him at its head to rally the men; ten charges that day were led by him in person. The power of resistance, which was the pride of the Lorraine troops, had reached a limit, when the scale was turned against them by Erlach's appearance on their flank. The combined onslaught of the French and Weimarians was irresistible; Ligniville's squadrons broke and fled; and the troops of the Spanish reserve, advancing too late, were overwhelmed and swept into the rout. The Prince, leaving Erlach to carry on the pursuit, found himself joined on the field by Gramont, and learned that the troops of the left wing had carried all before them. Gramont and his officers had carried out the policy of the slow advance and the delayed fire with triumphant success. Buquoy was in full flight; St. Maigrin and La Ferté were pursuing. The moment was sublime, and the Prince and Gramont meeting, would have embraced; but their chargers, still excited by the action, attacked each other furiously; the riders had to separate them; "and in so doing", says the Marshal, "were in as great danger as any they had passed that day".

While the Spanish cavalry fled over the plain westward towards Douai, Châtillon, opposed to Beck and the Archduke, was still engaged with the infantry. Earlier in the day the French battalions had been threatened with disaster. The 'Gardes Françaises', who occupied the post of honour in the centre of the first line, finding themselves within a few paces of the

enemy, had infringed their orders and rushed forward to the attack. Their charge was so vigorous that they broke through the enemy's line and penetrated far into the ranks; but here swift retribution overtook them. Beck, who was leading the squadrons detailed to support the infantry, took instant advantage of the mistake; the 'Gardes' found themselves hemmed in on every side; and the guns which they should have defended were taken. Châtillon, flower of the 'petits-mâîtres', was no less ready at need than his adversary. He called up the troops of the second line to fill the breach made in the first; then charged with his men-at-arms, recaptured the guns, and rescued the surrounded battalions, though not before they had suffered heavily. The Spaniards, despite all efforts, could not hold their advantage. Beck fought fiercely, but was disabled by a shot in the shoulder and made prisoner; Ligne, who had joined the centre with a handful of men when his own troops had been dispersed by Gramont, was also taken. The Archduke, seeing the day irretrievably lost, fled with the rest to Douai, followed by the last of his cavalry. The infantry, drawn up in a square, were left unsupported, as the 'tercios viejos' had been at Rocroy; but no such last stand was seen again; these battalions were gathered from many nations, and no proud tradition held them together. Châtillon was joined by Condé and Gramont; and the Prince ordered Roche, the captain of his guards, to charge the square. The exhausted ranks offered scarcely any resistance. Roche found them opening before them; there were cries for quarter, and this last remnant of the Archduke's army surrendered almost without a blow.

The battle had lasted, in all, less than three hours; but seldom has victory been more complete. Lens stands out, among Condé's triumphs, as the least clouded by loss of life on his own side, although killed and wounded together amounted to close on fifteen hundred. The Spanish loss was estimated at three thousand killed and five thousand wounded and prisoners. On the French side, the Guards had suffered far more severely than any other regiment, but there were many losses among the cavalry officers and on Condé's staff. Great grief was felt at the death of two young brothers, Louis and François de Champagne;

of the elder, Louis, Marquis de Normanville, the official narrative record that "he was twice wounded during the action, and died two days later. He had not long completed his seventeenth year, and this was the second campaign in which he had served with great credit as aide-de-camp to the Prince". La Moussaye's fate was at first uncertain. He was known to have been wounded, and his horse was found dead on the field; but some days later, after diligent inquiry by M. le Prince, it appeared that he had been carried with the rout to Douai, where he was safe, though a prisoner.

Since it was evident that the enemy were making no attempt to rally, from any quarter, the French Generals rode on towards Lens. They reached the fortress about midday, and the Prince learned that, as a last stroke of triumph, one of his officers, single-handed, had reduced the garrison to submission. Villequier, brought in a prisoner an hour or two earlier, had watched the defeat of the Spaniards in the plain; and, with the utmost presence of mind, had forthwith demanded that the town should surrender to him. He spoke so eloquently of the danger of awaiting Condé's attack, that he carried the day; and it was he who received M. le Prince at the gates and presented him with the keys of the town.

That evening Châtillon was on the road to Paris bearing the dispatch which was to give Condé's arch-enemy relief from one of his greatest cares. To Mazarin, the defeat of the Spanish army meant the peace of Europe; and he welcomed it even at the price of personal success for the Prince. To the Court, the news meant the reinstallation of M. le Prince on the highest pinnacle of fame; the Orleans faction was silenced, and 'les Lérída' were as though they had never been. Every courtier was ready to exclaim, like the phlegmatic hero of Dumas, when Lens roused him to enthusiasm: "Que c'est beau de s'appeler Condé!—et de porter ainsi son nom!"

CHAPTER XI

CONDÉ AND THE PARLIAMENT

1648

THE long uncertainty of the campaign had culminated in sixteen hours of acute suspense for the Queen, the Ministry, and the whole Court. On August 21st, at eight in the morning, there came a messenger from Arras, who stated positively that a great battle had been fought near the frontier the day before ; the town had been roused by the sound of firing. He could give no certain news of how the victory had gone. All he could testify was that, so far as was known, no fugitives had passed the frontier ; a hopeful sign, inasmuch as it argued a pursuit into the enemy's country. The Queen controlled her impatience as best she might, hoping every moment for Condé's dispatch. Hours passed, and it was not till midnight, just as she and her ladies were about to withdraw, that Châtillon was ushered in, triumphant. In a few words he reassured the Queen ; then, before an audience breathless with excitement, he embarked on a glowing narrative of the fight. He said least of his own exploits, and it was not till afterwards that, as one of his hearers observed, " we heard that this noble messenger had done wonders worthy of himself and of his race ".¹ But he did not forget that the Queen of France was a Princess of the House of Austria ; and in all her transports over the victory, she listened with visible pleasure to his courteous praises of the Archduke's courage and generalship. Mazarin was informed of the joyful tidings the same night. Next morning they were imparted to the little King, who so far forgot his precocious Royal instincts as to exclaim naïvely : " How very sorry the Parliament will be ! "

No clearer proof could be given of the strain which

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

Mazarin had undergone during the past months, than his rash and violent action in the moment of relief ; an action altogether foreign to his character, and one to which, at a more ordinary time, no pressure would have made him consent. The Queen's first thought was how best to chastise all or any who had dared to resist the edicts proclaimed in her son's name. By birth, or by marriage, she belonged to the two proudest Royal Houses of Europe; their traditions had entered into her, till, in spite of an easy and indolent disposition, the first hint of opposition to the Crown found her impracticable, and could change her from a placid, amiable woman, into a fury. Her demand for vengeance came before the Cardinal at the psychological moment when he was least inclined to resist it ; the reaction from a pressing fear gave him courage for a bold stroke, and hid from him how far the time chosen was ill-advised. His assent was given, without hesitation ; and the orders for the *Te Deum* of victory to be sung in Notre-Dame were scarcely issued, before a vigorous scheme of punishment was on foot.

Since the passing of the Edict of Union the demands of the Parliament had by degrees forced the Ministry into further concessions. Emery had been dismissed, and his post of finance minister given to the Marshal de la Meilleraie, whose private fortune and personal integrity were expected to outweigh his inexperience, and act as a safeguard against corruption. Several newly created offices had been abolished ; and the tax on property, from which the nobles were entirely exempt, was reduced by one-fourth. These reforms had been dictated by the whole assembly of the Parliament ; but, as it was pointed out to the Queen, to punish the whole assembly at one blow was clearly impossible ; the ringleaders must first be dealt with as examples. Three prominent members were chosen—more or less at random ; the ‘presidents’ Charton and Blancmesnil, and Broussel, a councillor of the ‘Grand’ Chambre’ ; a writ was issued for their arrest, and was promptly put into execution. No better time, it was urged, could be found than the day appointed for the *Te Deum*—August 26th, the feast of St. Louis. The King was to attend in state ; and along all the route, from the Palais-Royal to Notre-Dame, the Household troops would be stationed, ready to quell any disturbance that might follow on the arrests. The Parliament

was largely represented at the Te Deum, for every member was anxious to proclaim his patriotism and free himself from the suspicion so innocently voiced by Louis. Broussel and Blancmesnil were both present, and each, on his return, was arrested in his own house. Charton had received warning and escaped.

The news of Broussel's arrest roused a storm of indignation among the citizens of Paris. This veteran councillor was upwards of seventy years old ; poor, but incorruptible ; and in their eyes the personification of all that was upright and venerable. The whole city was roused to arms ; barricades were erected in the streets, and a furious crowd surrounded the Palais-Royal. La Meilleraie, attempting to address the mob, was driven back with stones and imprecations. The inmates of the palace began by making light of the disturbance, and Retz, a self-constituted emissary from the people, was greeted in the Royal presence with scarcely veiled derision. But it was soon clear that the Parisians were in no humour to be laughed at. After two days' ceaseless uproar, in the course of which the chancellor Séguier was mobbed, and his carriage fired upon, the Queen found herself compelled to yield. The eloquent demand of Molé,¹ ' first President ' or Speaker of the Parliament, added to the alarmed persuasion of her ministers, gained the day ; and both Broussel and Blancmesnil were set at liberty.

Mazarin perceived, too late, the harm which the Royal cause had suffered. Abroad, the advantage gained by the victory of Lens still held good ; but its effect on the State at home was practically destroyed. The Government had been worsted, in fair fight, by the Parliament and the people ; and, in addition, the Court had made at least one powerful enemy. Retz, keenly sensitive to ridicule as Condé himself, never forgot, or forgave, the treatment he had met with on the famous ' day of barricades ' ; and he was not soothed by hearing how, on the evening of that day, the Queen had been kept laughing for two hours by the comments of her household on the airs of M. le Coadjuteur, and his ostentatious efforts to quiet a disturbance which was believed to be partly of his own raising. ' The Fronde ' was no sooner named than

¹ Matthieu Molé, born 1584 ; President from 1641 ; noted for his courage and integrity throughout a long Parliamentary career.

Retz established himself as one of its leaders. Bachaumont, councillor of the Parliament, was responsible for the saying which took the town by storm, when he compared the assemblies of the Sovereign Courts to the meetings of students and apprentices, who practised the forbidden sport of the 'fronde', or sling, under the city wall.¹ In each case the game was repeatedly broken up by the authorities, and in each case it flourished notwithstanding. Retz was a born party politician; he saw the value of a nickname, and exploited it to the utmost; and in a few days ribbons, laces, ornaments of every kind, and even bread-rolls, were 'à la fronde'. The Scriptural associations were not forgotten; they gave more than one poet an opportunity:

"Monsieur notre Coadjuteur
Vend sa crosse pour une fronde;
Il est vaillant et bon pasteur,
Monsieur notre Coadjuteur;
Sachant qu'autrefois un frondeur
Devint le plus grand roi du monde,
Monsieur notre Coadjuteur
Vend sa crosse pour une fronde".

Retz had surveyed the situation with great care and small pretence of disinterestedness. Many schemes, half-framed, were in his mind, but one consideration influenced all alike; and that was the uncertainty as to which party M. le Prince would support, when the close of the campaign set him free to make his choice. The Bourbon spirit was never more strongly represented than in Condé, and all his natural instincts would hold him fast to the Court; but where the Court was, there was Mazarin, and the Coadjutor did not despair. He knew that his own personality was sympathetic to the Prince, just as Mazarin's was directly the reverse; and it was with a fair amount of confidence that he set himself to prepare his weapons of persuasion.

Condé heard the first detailed account of the Broussel riots from Châtillon, who had been present in Paris at the time. One intimation reached him earlier in the shape of instructions from the Government; certain troops were to be detached from the frontier force, near Guise, and to march on Paris in

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

case of further sedition ; but both Mazarin and Le Tellier joined in somewhat misleading assurances that the first disturbance had been entirely suppressed, and that future prospects were rather tranquil than otherwise. The truth was that, once the more violent tumult had subsided, the Cardinal was bent on delaying Condé's return as long as possible. M. le Prince was at no time a peaceful element, and so long as the war lasted, he would be far better, and more safely, employed with the army, than anywhere nearer at hand. Condé, for his part, had many reasons for wishing to give up the command. The great work of the campaign was done, but the strain had told on him ; he was very much out of health ; and the reports from Paris gave him constant anxiety. Matters were not now as in his father's lifetime, when ' M. le Duc ' could win glory in the field, while the elder Prince watched over family interests at home ; if any great crisis were at hand, he must play his part, as head of his House, and not be outdone by any machinations of the Orleans or Vendôme factions. Writing from Estaires on September 1st, the Prince asks Mazarin to see that the Queen shall accept his resignation as soon as he has accomplished the retaking of Furnes. He will then be at hand to serve Her Majesty, if civil disturbance should make it necessary ; if not, he proposes taking a course of the waters at Forges. Mazarin answered by a string of diplomatic objections ; the enemy, seeing M. le Prince apparently recalled in haste, might exaggerate the importance of the riots ; the people of Paris might be startled into fresh rebellion by rumours that an army was on its way to deal with them. No mere ministerial argument was forcible enough to convince Condé against his will ; but, as fate would have it, by the time he was able to return to Paris, the Cardinal was more than ready to receive him.

Furnes was not expected to offer long resistance ; the only chance of relief was from Sfondrato's force, which still hovered between the coast-towns. Rantzau, after much preparation, and at least one false start, had completed the investment on August 30th, and was now directing siege operations, though with only moderate zeal, and a doubtful regard for instructions. Condé bore with him for a time, not wishing to increase the distance between himself and Paris ; but presently,

in answer to some communication, he received a letter from Rantzau, dated 'Camp of Furnes, or near Furnes, whichever you please'; and the tone, at once insolent and unprofessional, roused him to sudden action. He left Estaires, without a word of warning to Rantzau, and appeared before Furnes, entirely unexpected, on the morning of September 7th, in a great downpour of rain; bringing with him nearly all the troops of Erlach's contingent. Puységur, who had known the Prince intimately at Ypres and at Courtrai, was first made aware of this new arrival. "I was leaving Rantzau's quarters", he says, "when I heard a man come up behind me, and felt him seize hold of my head with both hands. I said at first: 'For God's sake, let me alone. Can't you see that I am wet through, and in no mood for joking?'" But the unknown hands held him all the tighter. At last he wrenched himself free, turned, and saw the Prince: "I never thought you were here, Monseigneur! What made you come?" "Your General wrote a letter that brought me", answered Condé; "he dated it 'Furnes, or near Furnes'; and as we must either take this place or risk losing Dunkirk, I came to make sure that we do take it".¹ Puységur declared that the town would be theirs in two days, provided the rain ceased; but the weather had delayed operations from the outset. Condé lost no time in assuming the command. Arnauld was sent with a fresh summons to the garrison to surrender; and Puységur, to find quarters for the newly arrived troops; no easy task in the flooded state of the country. Meanwhile the Prince himself set out for the trenches, and there, as it was said, "persisted in doing the duty of a General, a company officer, and a private, all at once";² with the result that, before the end of the day, he had passed through as narrow an escape as any that befell him in the course of his life. He was directing and sharing in the work, under fire from the walls, when a musket-ball struck him on the hip-joint. The bullet was partly spent, and a fold in his buff-coat turned it; but only that chance pleat of leather saved him from a broken thigh, an injury which in those days was generally fatal. The force of the blow was enough to make him lose consciousness; and Puységur, coming off

¹ Puységur, *Mémoires*.² *Letters of Guy Patin*.

duty, was dismayed to meet M. le Prince being carried helpless into camp. The surgeons found on examination that the bone was not broken ; but it was an age of heroic remedies ; they “ judged it well to make several incisions in the bruise ”, and it is not surprising to learn that “ although the wound was in no way dangerous, His Highness suffered great pain”. That evening he heard that no answer to the last summons had been sent from the town ; and, fearing lest his hurt might delay matters, he sent for Puységur and desired him to go instantly and take order with the Governor. “ What terms shall I give them ? ” asked Puységur ; who enjoyed some reputation as an envoy. “ The worst you can ”, answered the Prince,—“ make them all prisoners of war, if possible”. Puységur did his utmost ; the articles of surrender were signed that day ; but it was agreed that the garrison should have their liberty, in exchange for that of the survivors of ‘ Piémont ’, taken prisoners at Ostend.¹

The bullet of Furnes decided the question of Condé’s resignation very effectually ; he could not hope to be fit for active service before the end of the campaigning season. “ I protest ”, wrote Mazarin, “ that I shudder each time I think of how easily the wound might have been mortal ” ;² and the words were so far sincere that each day, as it passed, found him more in need of a powerful protector ; M. le Prince must be propitiated at all costs. The Queen’s message betrays the same tone : “ I implore you earnestly to return, as soon as your health allows ; there is no other way in which you can please me so well ”.³ The Princess Dowager sends characteristic letters, full of fears and recommendations. She had loved her son less as Prince than as Duke ; his dealings with his family had seemed arbitrary, even to her, and she resented, though she could not resist them ; but her feelings were never proof against the thought of his danger : “ I am in dreadful anxiety, although the Chevalier de Gramont assures me that your wound is slight ; but the letter which I hear you wrote has not arrived. Send back a message quickly, my dear son, and put an end to my grief ; for until I know the truth from yourself I shall always imagine that they are keeping your injuries from me. . . . I beg of you not to

¹ Puységur, *Mémoires*.

³ *A.C.*, September 12, 1648.

² **A.C.*, September 12, 1648.

try and get up too soon, and to take care of your health, for which I pray God without ceasing".¹

The letter of which the Princess speaks, is not among the *Archives of Chantilly*; but it may be hoped that she was soon made glad by it, and by other assurances that the Chevalier spoke truth. In a few days the Prince was able to be moved from Furnes to Calais. His intention, as expressed to Mazarin, was to travel by slow stages to Chantilly, and there to complete his recovery; "unless", he adds, "Her Majesty should send orders for me to join her earlier, in which case I will obey immediately".² The pretext of health was genuine enough; but it seems probable that Condé may have wished to observe the political situation from some point nearer than the frontier, before embarking all his interests in a cause which was Mazarin's as well as the King's. He spent two or three days at Calais; and there found some amusement in the reappearance of the Comte de Bussy-Rabutin, for the first time since his late inglorious exploit. Bussy approached in some trepidation; he knew the Prince well, and he feared, not blame, but ridicule. However, his arrival was welcome, and he escaped more easily than was expected; only, he says, when he was ushered into the room where M. le Prince still kept his bed, His Highness burst out laughing, and began to sing:

"Oh, la folle entreprise
Du Prince de Condé!"

—a once popular verse on the unsuccessful campaign of a former Prince; and insisted, further, on hearing every detail of the adventure from beginning to end.³ All Bussy's acquaintance in the army received him with congratulations; but one or two fired his jealousy by telling him of a young Gascon officer—"le petit Guitaut", as he was called, to distinguish him from an elder kinsman, "le vieux Guitaut", Captain of the Queen's guard. The younger Guitaut had done duty as cornet of the 'chevaux-légers de Condé' in Bussy's enforced absence, and was said by some to have supplanted his interest with the Prince. In later years he was to prove himself a formidable rival, not only with Condé, but also as a favoured correspondent of Madame de Sévigné.

¹ A.C., September 12, 1648.

² A.C., September 14, 1648.

³ Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

When M. le Prince came to Chantilly on September 18th, he found that the Queen had accepted his offer of immediate service ; more eagerly, perhaps, than he anticipated. Urged by her ministers, she was straining every nerve to make sure of his support from the outset ; it was essential that he should be seen at her side, displaying his allegiance, in the very instant of his return. The Court was no longer in Paris. Since the day of the barricades there had been no outbreak as violent, but smaller disturbances had scarcely ceased ; to say nothing of the personal abuse showered on ' Dame Anne ', and ' the Sicilian '. Anger influenced the Queen, as fear influenced Mazarin ; it was to show her displeasure, as much as to avoid danger, that she removed the King from his capital, and accepted the hospitality of the Duchesse d'Aiguillon at Rueil. Where the King was, at such a crisis, the Prime Minister must be, and Mazarin thankfully availed himself of his office to escape from the threats of the mob. More than once, so his servants reported, he had been on the point of flight ; and after the Broussel riots he had spent a whole night booted and spurred for the journey. Rueil was a place of comparative safety, but the distance from Paris was trifling. All the significance of the Queen's action lay in the facts that the King was outside the walls of the city, and that he had been transported thither as a punishment to his subjects. The alleged reason that the Palais-Royal was in need of cleaning, was doubtless true, so far as it went ; but it deceived no one. For the moment, the Queen had secured an effective form of revenge ; the Parisians had a strong proprietary feeling for ' la personne du Roi ', and, moreover, the unexpected absence of the Court was bad for trade. Some attempt was even made by the citizens to stop the King's baggage-waggons as they passed through the gates ; and the Queen could not ensure a safe journey for herself and her son without sending for the ' prévôt des marchands ',¹ and giving him a fallacious promise that His Majesty should return within a week.

It was to Rueil, therefore, that Condé was summoned, to show his loyalty, and there he was received with every mark of favour and distinction. No compliment was too extravagant for the victor of Lens, who

¹ The position of the ' prévôt des marchands ' was more or less equivalent to that of the Lord Mayor.

was now to be the chief defender of the Crown ; and the Queen was heard to declare that she loved him as a third son. Mazarin hoped, and believed, that interest and pride of race would act alike as barriers between Condé and the Parliament ; but he knew, from the first, that victory would not be without a struggle. To win the Prince, he must fight for him ; and Retz, his chief opponent, was only too well equipped for the fray. Condé's attitude, in this hour of vital importance to his career, has been discussed by each and all of his contemporary critics. That he should be accused of deliberate treason,—of stirring up civil war to gain his own ends,—was perhaps inevitable. Those whose circumstances and private knowledge of him best qualify them to judge, acquit him, with one voice, of any such premeditated design. Retz and La Rochefoucauld, leaders of the Fronde ; Madame de Motteville, who steadily champions the Queen ; Lenet, confidential agent of M. le Prince ; and Bussy, who cherished more than one grievance against him, are all agreed on this point. Their reasons are the more sincere for appearing, in a sense, uncomplimentary. If the Prince refrained from such an obvious course, it was far less from principle than from distaste and incapacity for deep-laid schemes of the kind ; he lacked, not intelligence, but application, and above all, self-command, for carrying them through. In war, he was a master of action rather than of strategy ; in politics, Lenet, his most intimate adviser, admits, almost with a touch of scorn, that he found him habitually “ with no fixed design ; living, as the saying is, from one day to another ”.¹ The Coadjutor's view is especially characteristic ; Condé, as a politician, perplexed and disappointed him. He felt, as Richelieu had felt ten years earlier, that here, of all others, was the Prince to be sought as an ally ; one who, more than any man in the kingdom, combined the prestige of rank with a brilliant and compelling personality. Retz speaks of these gifts with something like envy, and with a very clear idea of the use he himself could have made of them. If, as he says, M. le Prince had followed his good intentions with more prudence, he might certainly have re-established the State ; but “ if his intentions had been evil ”—here sounds a note of real enthusiasm—

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

" he might have gone all lengths, at a time when the King's youth, the Queen's obstinacy, Monsieur's weakness, and many other causes, opened to a young Prince full of talent, and already crowned with laurels, a far wider and more glorious career than that of MM. de Guise (under the Valois) ".¹ Richelieu lived long enough to find difficulties in dealing with the boy ; Retz, in his fuller experience of the man, analysed both his strength and his weakness, and marvelled at the ' want of discipline and proportion ' in a mind whose powers compelled his heartfelt admiration.

The palace at Rueil could not accommodate Princes and their suites, as well as those of the King, the Queen-Regent, and the Cardinal. Condé took up his residence in Paris, and visited the Queen from his own house. Retz profited by the opportunity ; M. le Prince had scarcely set foot in the Hôtel de Condé before the Parliament began their advances. They had been lately armed with a fresh grievance. The Queen, once outside Paris, had felt able to make another attempt at asserting the Royal authority ; no more popular leaders were arrested, but the new victim, the Comte de Chavigny, was suspected of friendly dealings with the Parliament, and of intriguing to win over M. le Prince. Chavigny, formerly in the Ministry, and now Governor of Vincennes, had the humiliating experience of finding himself a prisoner within the walls of his own fortress. His arrest took place on September 18th, the day before Condé's arrival at Chantilly. The incident made no special appeal to the public, and there was no repetition of the Broussel riots ; but for their own safety the members of Parliament determined to lodge a formal protest against this practice of arbitrary imprisonment. A deputation was appointed to be received by the Queen at Rueil ; and others to wait on Monsieur and on M. le Prince, with a view to discovering their intentions. Condé's answer, from the Cardinal's point of view, was all that could be wished ; he made fervent protestations of loyalty, adding that he was about to see the Queen, and receive her orders with all possible submission, and that he advised his questioners to do the same. To uphold the Crown against the insistence of the subject, was the natural instinct of every Bourbon ; but in justice to Condé's powers of

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

judgment, it must be said that, in theory at least, he was disposed towards conciliation. Nearly three months earlier he had written to Mazarin from Le Catelet : " I wish I were more capable of advising Her Majesty in the present crisis. I do not see, however, that she can take a wiser course than to deal gently with these matters, and to try by every means to win back disaffected spirits, before proceeding to extreme measures ; at the same time "—the conclusion was inevitable—" to suffer no diminution of the Royal authority, which she must maintain to the end ".¹ This admirably judicial frame of mind held good so long as M. le Prince was not actually confronted by aggrieved representatives of the Parliament ; when, as it was soon to appear, his wise resolutions melted like snow in summer. On his first return to Paris, both sides looked to him as mediator ; and he was fully prepared to undertake the part. His meeting with the Coadjutor was not long delayed. Retz took care to be informed of the exact hour at which Condé intended to pay his respects to the Queen, and timed his own arrival at Rueil just after the first rapturous greeting of the hero had been accomplished. The Coadjutor had made no secret of his opinions ; and only his eagerness to interview the Prince, together with an assurance of his protection, led him to brave the dangers of the visit, in these days of sudden arrests. He found the Queen, with a brilliant company, taking her ' collation ' in the gardens ; she greeted him cordially, and, as a special compliment, offered him one of the Spanish lemons which had just been sent from her own country. No one besides herself should taste them, she declared, excepting the Cardinal, M. le Prince, the Princess Dowager, and M. le Coadjuteur. Time had been, at the Court of France, when such a favour would have been more alarming than coldness ; but Anne of Austria was no Medici Queen-mother. The meal passed gaily ; and when it was over, the Prince took occasion to whisper to Retz as he passed him : " I will come to you to-morrow at seven o'clock ; there will be too many people at the Hôtel de Condé ".²

The length at which Retz has reported his own share of the several interviews that followed, cannot but give rise to scepticism. Could any such harangues

¹ A.C., July 2, 1648.

² Retz, *Mémoires*.

have been delivered impromptu? Even if this were possible, Condé would surely never have listened with patience. But there is every reason to suppose that the substance of most of the dialogue is correct. Retz set forth the glory, and the material advantage, to be gained by the course he suggested; how the Prince might supplant Mazarin in the Queen's favour, and at the same time secure allies among the Parliament; and by this means find himself "master of the Council, and arbiter in the State". Condé heard, and seemed convinced. Retz even asserts that he agreed to attend a private meeting at the house of one Longeuil, councillor of the 'Grand' Chambre', and a renowned 'frondeur'; but whether this scheme was ever carried out, no record remains to show. The hopes of the Coadjutor, and all his party, rose high; only to be shattered, a few days later, by a public encounter between the Prince and the delegates of the Parliament. The Queen, instead of returning to Paris, had removed the whole Court to St. Germain before the end of September; and here it was proposed that, as a conciliatory measure, a series of conferences should be held, for inquiry into and redress of existing grievances. Gaston, as 'son of France', and Condé, as 'first Prince' formally invited the Parliament, by letter, to choose a band of delegates to meet them for this purpose. The Parliament, replying to the summons, asked to confer with the Princes, 'and with them only'. Whether the idea of excluding Mazarin had its origin in the 'Grand' Chambre', or, as Retz asserts, with M. le Prince, has never been clearly established; but it is certain that the Cardinal offered little resistance. In the first place, he had a physical dread of violent scenes; in the second, he hoped to make a bid for popular favour by holding aloof. If the conferences should be unsuccessful, some part, at least, of the public dislike would be diverted from him to the Princes; more especially as Condé's disposition was not one to make him beloved in council.

On the day appointed (September 25th) the chosen delegates appeared, with the dignified figure of Molé at their head. Next to him in importance was Violle, 'président aux enquêtes'; able and vigorous in debate, but little respected by his colleagues, and notoriously unscrupulous in his private life; second to none in his hatred of Mazarin, and already advocating a revival of

the 'decree of 1617', which forbade any foreigner to hold office in the State. Sixteen others, presidents and councillors of the Sovereign Courts, completed the deputation. They were received by four Princes—Gaston, Condé, Conti, and Longueville; and the conference was opened in due form, Monsieur presiding with much grace of manner. The hours that followed brought a new experience to M. le Prince; one which was to be repeated as often as he and the 'bonnets carrés' met in opposition. No worse training for debate could be imagined than his life in camp, in a circle of which he was at once the hero, and the spoilt child; and that he should show more consideration towards these civilians than towards his own officers, was an idea that never even occurred to him. He might be willing to admit the claims of the Parliament as a body, but as individuals they acted on his nerves, and irritated him beyond endurance. The delegates—and here lay the novelty of the situation—were far too conscious of their own importance to let themselves be browbeaten. They were outraged by the behaviour of a Prince who, when discussion arose, either turned them into ridicule, or lost his temper and stormed at them; but they were only the more determined to stand on their rights. This earliest conference had scarcely opened before M. le Prince discovered cause for offence. Chavigny's arrest was the first question to be brought forward. Viole moved the petition for his release, declaring at the same time that this point must be settled 'as a preliminary', and that till some assurance against these arbitrary arrests could be given them, no other subject would be entered upon. The bare suggestion of a dictatorial tone was quite enough to rouse Condé, who objected, vehemently, that it was not for subjects to stipulate as to 'preliminaries' in dealing with their Sovereign; he repeated Viole's phrase, holding it up to derision. Viole protested that the offending expression was only used to emphasise their humble prayers and supplications. Molé, and some other pacific spirits, intervened, and the discussion was allowed to pass to different matters; requests were made for the reduction, by one-fourth, of the existing taxes, and further, for the immediate return of the Court to Paris; but no conclusions were arrived at that day, and the meeting broke up in dissatisfaction.

The image of Condé—fierce, insolent, and uncontrolled—was vividly impressed on the mind of each delegate ; and though, in his calmer moments, he was more than half prepared to serve their cause, he remained for ever, to the majority of them, an incarnation of the tyranny of Princes.

Four times in the course of the next ten days the conferences were renewed ; and in the end the Parliament had the upper hand. Condé, for all his impracticability in council, was at heart convinced by his better judgment. Of the four Princes, it was he who, from the first, urged the Queen most strongly to concession ; telling her plainly, to her great indignation, that this was no time for punishments. As to the matter of arrests, Chavigny was a friend to the House of Condé, and one who might do good service on his release ; moreover, it was impossible to forget that even Princes of the Blood had been imprisoned before now, and that a guarantee of safety was not to be despised. But apart from all personal considerations, it was evident to Princes and Ministers alike that the choice lay between concession and civil war ; and not one among them, as yet, seemed prepared for the latter alternative. Monsieur lacked energy ; Conti and Longueville, influence ; Condé held Mazarin and ' Messieurs du Parlement ' in almost equal abhorrence, and was unwilling to throw in his lot, irrevocably, with either party. To Retz he spoke of " those devils in square caps " ; " who ", he said, " will either drag me with them into a civil war, or force me to put that rascally Sicilian over their heads and mine ". The cause of the Parliament was not without attraction, especially when advocated with all the skill Retz could command. More than once Condé seemed to waver, and contempt for ' the Sicilian ' was strong within him ; but still his hesitation resolved itself into the high-sounding sentiment : " My name is Louis de Bourbon ; I can do nothing to shake the power of the Crown ".¹ He was none the less keenly aware that this same power could only be maintained, at the present time, by judicious yielding. The Queen was deeply incensed against all the Princes for their attempts to persuade her, and more especially against Condé, whom she knew to be the dominant spirit

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

among them ; but the coalition was too strong for her. She declared, with tears, that her son would be no better than 'a King of cardboard' ; and it was not till nearly a fortnight after the last conference that the 'Declaration' agreed upon by all parties received her signature. The Parliament, having good reason for satisfaction, received the terms with many promises of future obedience. The demand for reduced taxation was granted absolutely ; the power of the Crown to imprison subjects 'without question', greatly modified. Chavigny and certain other political prisoners were to be released forthwith ; and the King was to return to Paris within the next few days.

The Queen's consent was finally wrung from her on October 22nd. Almost on the same day, the concluding treaty of the Peace of Westphalia was signed at Münster, and the Thirty Years' War was at an end. Not that hostilities ceased altogether ; for Spain, alone among the Powers, held aloof from the treaty, and prepared to maintain war against France single-handed, trusting to put an army together during the winter season. Still, the terms of peace were so unquestionably favourable to French interests, as to constitute a triumph for Mazarin's foreign policy. The territorial gains were not large in extent, but such possessions as Austrian Alsace, and the Rhine, from Basle to Constance, were of inestimable value, for purposes of communication in time of war. Above all, the central power of Germany was broken by the enforced recognition of smaller Sovereigns. The rulers of the Upper and Lower Palatinates, the Elector of Treves, and the Grand-Duke of Hesse-Cassel, were all to enjoy their free rights, and each one was known to be a firm ally of France. The stimulus of success was renewed, and the Cardinal began once more to meditate schemes for the annihilation of all rebellion in the State. Once certain of Condé's support, he would not have hesitated to declare open war on the rebels ; and that support came every day more nearly within his reach. With growing satisfaction he watched the relations between M. le Prince and the 'frondeurs', and realised that his own self-effacement, and Condé's natural disposition, were producing exactly the effect he intended. Let the Princes avail themselves of their

privileges ; let them go to the Parliament, when the Court returned to Paris, and take part in the debates as often as possible. A few more encounters, and Condé would be effectually cured of any lurking inclination to play the part of the people's friend.

CHAPTER XII

THE INVESTMENT OF PARIS

1648-49

WITH the signing of the ' Declaration ' at St. Germain, the earliest stage of the Fronde reaches its close. Up to that time, the movement, despite the motives of many concerned in it, could still lay claim to a patriotic character. If Retz and Viole were among its leaders, so also were Molé and Broussel. But now, as Retz increased his ascendancy, the more dignified elements fell into the background, thrust aside by a horde of Princes and nobles, whose aims were openly unscrupulous and self-seeking, but whose alliance was eagerly sought by the Coadjutor. The Parliament, in the first elation of their success, looked towards England ; they saw a King the prisoner of his subjects, and burned with emulation, forgetting that the power of the English Parliament lay in the fact that they were, what no French Chamber had ever been, a truly representative national assembly. If Mazarin was prepared to declare a civil war, this body of magistrates, recruited entirely from the learned professions, was no less ready to meet him. Retz, however, was fully aware of his allies' limitations ; he realised that the party, in its present state, was unfitted either to organise an army or to lead public opinion. Some figure was needed to impress the crowd by rank and brilliancy, if not by solid worth. Retz himself had brilliancy, but his prestige was not great enough, and he knew it ; moreover, his profession, though not his temperament, made it difficult for him to take an active part in war. Condé was the prize for which both parties had striven ; the Coadjutor had done his utmost to win him, and now, conscious of failure, looked for some more or less efficient substitute ; for

there were many Princes, though Condé was, in every sense, 'the Prince'. The result of the search appears not long before the end of the year, in a statement by La Rochefoucauld: "I heard", he says, "from Madame de Longueville, that the whole scheme of a civil war had been drawn up and agreed upon at Noisy, between the Prince of Conti, M. de Longueville, and the Coadjutor of Paris". The Duchess herself had no doubt taken part in their counsels. They still hoped, she added, to persuade M. le Prince to act with them. Longueil, Broussel, and Viole represented the Parliament; and, if Retz is to be believed, made all the promises required of them without the knowledge of their colleagues.

Retz showed all his wonted intelligence in turning to Madame de Longueville, when he found her brother beyond his reach. The nymph of Chantilly, after some years of marriage, had lost little or none of her beauty; while she had gained considerably in ambition and in political influence. Her husband, twenty-three years her senior, was a man whom, at any age, it would have been difficult for her to love or to respect. For a while the training of the nuns of St. Denis had prevailed, and her flirtations, if numerous, had been harmless enough; but circumstances had proved too strong for her; she had entered into an intrigue with La Rochefoucauld, which, for the time being, placed her entirely in his power. At the same time she held sway over a host of admirers, among whose names was mentioned that of Turenne. It was rumoured that she had laid her spell on him in the course of her journey to Münster; when, as she passed the frontier, he received her with great ceremony. "M. de Turenne went to meet your sister", wrote the Dowager Princess to her son; "he passed all his army in review for her, and escorted her two days on her journey; she begs me to tell you this".¹ The political influence of the Duchess was slightly marred by the fact that she was on less good terms with her brother than formerly, each suspecting the other of interference in their respective private affairs; but Retz believed firmly in their mutual affection, and there was every reason to suppose that the breach might be healed. Conti,—'le petit frère', as the Parisians began to call him, in

¹ * A.C., September, 1646.

distinction to the 'grand frère', M. le Prince,—was willing to be dominated by his sister in all things ; so that one Prince, at least, was secured to the Fronde. There remained the need of a leader who could supply the frankly popular element, and, for this purpose, the Coadjutor found Beaufort ready to his hand ; Beaufort, with his good looks undiminished, and with an additional halo of romance shed on him by his daring escape from Vincennes. The united powers of Madame de Longueville, Conti, and this 'king of the markets' might fairly be held to equal those of Condé alone, and Retz was well satisfied with such a foundation. For further support, he waited ; certain that a party where all Mazarin's enemies might find welcome, would not long be in want of adherents. Already, La Rochefoucauld had accepted Madame de Longueville's suggestion, and thrown himself eagerly into the project for war. Mazarin had refused him a duke's patent ; "and I now saw my way", he says, "to showing the Queen and the Cardinal that they would have done well to consider me".¹

Throughout the few weeks that intervened, before open hostilities were declared, plotting and quarrelling were ceaseless. At one moment it seemed as though Monsieur himself might join the ranks of opposition. The Abbe de la Rivière, still foremost as a confidant, had set his heart on a Cardinal's hat, and Monsieur had made application on his behalf in the King's name. The Pope (Innocent x) granted the request ; and the transaction was all but accomplished, when La Rivière, to his wrath and dismay, heard that M. le Prince was making a like application for his brother of Conti ; and that, since not even the King of France could nominate more than one Cardinal at a time, the honour promised to a mere Abbé, scarcely a gentleman by birth, was to be unhesitatingly revoked in favour of a Prince of the Blood. No boy of nineteen had ever felt, or shown, less vocation than Conti for the sacred office. He had made some efforts at positive resistance ; and lately, as an assertion of independence, had appeared at Court dressed, not in sober black or violet, but in the most brilliant colours, and wearing a sword. The elder brother, however, had passed the decree. The provision made by the Church was an

¹ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

obvious refuge for younger sons, and relieved their families of all inconvenient obligation towards their support ; and if the Prince had suffered coercion on other matters in his own boyhood, he was all the more ready now to play the tyrant. The Princess Dowager acquiesced in his decision ; her younger son had been, especially of late years, her favourite, but she was convinced that his health would never let him follow the profession of arms, which was the only alternative. Before their joint attack, Conti was forced to yield, trusting to some chance obstacle in the future. Meanwhile Gaston had been persuaded that La Rivière's disappointment was a slight to himself. Condé laughed, and reminded the Queen that anger, in that quarter, had never yet produced any very terrible consequences. La Rivière presumed so far as to make covert advances towards M. le Prince, and beg him to withdraw his application altogether, offering, in return, to serve him in the obtaining of any post or favour he might covet for himself ; but Condé, strong in the knowledge that the Queen would, just now, refuse him scarcely any gift of power or place, thanked M. l'Abbé sarcastically, and assured him that he had no wish to improve his present position. Mazarin, more cautious, felt that this was not a moment for lightly offending any Prince. He was justified in that Gaston, encouraged by a troop of discontented nobles, showed himself more implacable than was his wont. A compromise was agreed upon, by which La Rivière's nomination was to hold good ; while another Sovereign, the Queen of Poland, was to apply on behalf of the House of Condé. There the matter rested ; and, as it proved, the events of the Fronde altered Conti's destiny ; but Monsieur did not yield without delay. The Queen received no visit of ceremony from him on her return to Paris ; he kept apart, at the Luxembourg Palace, surrounded by the Vendôme and Lorraine Princes. The Court was in dismay. Mazarin, half expecting an open attack, ordered the guard to be doubled before the Palais-Royal ; but his alarm was groundless, for Monsieur was Monsieur still ; no persuasions could change his nature. At the moment when his followers were congratulating themselves, and when a declaration of war was hourly expected, he suddenly tired of the whole controversy,

and, the better to escape importunities, announced that he had an attack of gout, and took to his bed. Madame, Mademoiselle, nobles and Princes, urged him in vain; Mazarin had found means to work on his jealousy by representing that Condé would be left undisputed master of both Court and Council; and La Rivière, who, once his promotion was secure, asked nothing but peace, added arguments and entreaties. In a few days Gaston arose from his pretended illness, became reconciled to the Queen, and prepared to withstand the Parliament in the coming debates, side by side with M. le Prince.

With the passing of Martinmas (November 11th), the members of the Sovereign Courts set aside all semblance of restriction on their meetings. Their grievances, in truth, had met with little redress; the Declaration had been published, but there was no sign, as yet, of any measure for carrying out its chief conditions. Days passed, and still no satisfaction appeared; till at length, to quiet fresh murmurs, a general assembly was convened for December 9th. The occasion promised excitement; and when the Princes entered to take their places on the raised seats tapestried with fleur-de-lys, the great Chamber of St. Louis was filled to overflowing. The benches reserved for the Peers of France were crowded, and two councillors had unwillingly to yield their places to the Dukes of Brissac and St. Simon. Gaston was prepared to find some enjoyment in the debate; he had a considerable gift for expressing himself, and his habitual indifference kept him in good humour. Above all, he was conscious of appearing to infinitely greater advantage than M. le Prince, whose ready wit served him little when temper, judgment, and self-control were lost on the smallest provocation.

The chief subjects named for discussion were those arising from the national expenditure. Mention was made, in particular, of the disorderly conduct of the troops, who, unpaid and undisciplined, were ravaging the country round Paris to support themselves, pillaging the inhabitants, and giving rise to reports that the King's ministers intended laying siege to his capital. Why, the Parliament demanded, had these men not been paid what was due to them, when millions had been levied for the support of the army? Another scandal was the present administration of the King's

Household, for which, again, large sums were continually set apart; yet which had been so wastefully conducted that every department was in want, while the ladies and gentlemen in waiting, it was said, had scarcely enough to eat. This last statement would seem incredible but for other witnesses than those quoted in the assembly; a lady of the Court, writing to Marie de Gonzague, Queen of Poland, tells her of the fervent devotion of the Duc de Gramont to one of the Queen's maids-of-honour; and how, to commend himself to her, "he sends all kinds of eatables every day to her and her companions, who prefer that kind of gift to any other, seeing to what poor fare they are accustomed".¹ The councillors were not greatly concerned over the sufferings of the courtiers, but they were rightly prepared to attack a corrupt and extravagant system. They also had questions to put as to the treatment of certain officers of the King's body-guard who had lately been dismissed from their post, ostensibly on account of a brawl with the city guards, but in reality, it was suspected, as enemies of Mazarin. The person in authority, directly or indirectly responsible for mismanagement in all matters dealing with the household, was none other than M. le Prince, in his hereditary capacity of 'Grand Maître de la Maison du Roi'. The office, in his case, was chiefly honorary, and the incident of dismissal had taken place independently of him, during his absence on the campaign; but he was as little inclined to make excuse as to suffer remonstrance. All complaints as to the non-payment of the troops—his own 'army of Flanders'—incensed him still further. The presumption of the 'square caps' in cross-examining him, and their pretensions to decide what sum was necessary for maintaining the forces, seemed to him not only impertinent, but positively grotesque; and he was soon as hotly engaged in making enemies as Mazarin could have hoped. With regard to the officers, he interrupted the president Laisné; "using expressions", says an auditor, "not often addressed to those gentlemen", and declaring that "if he chose to dismiss any of his subordinates, he had the right to do so without being answerable to the Parliament". Laisné, encouraged by the applause of the younger members, continued to point

¹ Madame de Langeron to the Queen of Poland, *A.C.*, October 29, 1648.

out the justice of his criticisms. Condé rose in his place, white with anger, and flung up his hand, in a gesture accepted as a threat. Whatever words he used were scarcely heard in the outcry that followed. Never had such an insult been offered to the assembly ; and it was with great difficulty that Molé, seconded by Gaston, could restore order for the debate to proceed. Condé afterwards denied having consciously threatened anyone ; but it was clear that he had been in no state to judge of his own actions. In vain his friends tried to excuse him, on the plea that this much-discussed gesture was habitual to him in moments of excitement, and had no special significance ; the general feeling was voiced in the answer of an outspoken councillor, that " if such was the case, it was a most unbecoming gesture, and the Prince ought to correct himself of it ". No denial or apology was made at the time ; the tumult gradually subsided, and the dangerous topic of the army was resumed. Condé at first objected, quite unjustly, that the Parliament had no right to express an opinion on military matters. Broussel rose to prove the contrary, was twice interrupted, and was only able through Monsieur's intervention to finish his speech. The climax was brought about by Deslandes-Payen, councillor of the ' *enquêtes* ', who insisted that 800,000 francs a month should suffice for the pay and maintenance of all the forces now in any part of the kingdom ; twenty-five thousand foot and ten thousand horse. " Would you keep them yourself for that money ? " asked the Prince. " I would, and for less ", answered Deslandes-Payen unabashed. " I would have as good fighting men as any in France ; and if any one of them stole so much as a chicken, I would have him hanged for a thief ! " Other members made themselves heard, telling of fearful crimes and depredations committed by the troops ; till at length Viole addressed the assembly, with a sudden display of religious sentiment, real or assumed. No redress, he said, could be hoped for while the present system continued, and while Messieurs les Princes would not let their eyes be opened : " All we can do ", he concluded, " is to offer our prayers to the Holy Ghost for their better guidance and inspiration ". " That would be a good beginning ! " Condé retorted, " as though Monsieur and I could not guide ourselves

well enough without prayer". This deplorably flippant speech was received with almost disproportionate horror. Goulas, the secretary in attendance on Monsieur, describes the fatal impression caused by such recklessness, "in a place where most speakers were accustomed to weigh each syllable"; and how the Prince lost more credit in that moment's anger than he had gained in four great battles.

Condé's best friends and advisers were only too well aware of the extent to which his reputation would suffer; the debate was scarcely closed before they expended themselves in warnings and persuasions. Other meetings were convened on December 16th, 17th, and 22nd; but no conciliation seemed possible. The Prince was alternately exasperated by the independent attitude of the members, and bored beyond endurance by the length at which they expressed themselves; he persistently ignored the rules of the assembly, and seldom missed an opportunity for putting himself in the wrong. The Queen and Mazarin hailed the news of each encounter with unmixed joy. Condé would find himself irrevocably bound to the Court, and with his help all things might be accomplished. Designs for the siege of Paris, already suggested at the time of the King's journey to Rueil, were brought under immediate consideration. Retz gives a dramatic account of an interview which he states to have taken place on the evening of December 9th, when the Prince swore that he would teach the Parliament a lesson, and the Coadjutor, who for months past had heard rumours of a siege, made mention of the scheme as one impossible to carry out. Condé answered swiftly: "We shall not take Paris like Dunkirk, with mines or by assault; but if the bread from Gonesse were to fail for a week——!" Gonesse was a suburb of Paris from which large supplies of bread were daily brought into the town; supplies which might easily be cut off by a cordon of troops. This idea of slow starvation, without further aggressive measures, had from the first commended itself to Mazarin; it called for least immediate outlay, as well as for least show of violence. Condé, at heart, inclined to more prompt and characteristic action. He looked on the proposal concerning the 'bread of Gonesse' as no better than a makeshift; the plan he had laid before the Queen and her ministers was of another kind. The

King, he said, must on no account leave Paris ; if the Palais-Royal could not be sufficiently protected, let him and the Queen be lodged in the fortified buildings of the Arsenal, near to the Bastille and the Porte St. Antoine. The troops already round Paris should be strengthened by further detachments from the frontier and the provinces, and should be concentrated in the ' faubourg ' of St. Antoine outside the city gate. Then with an army of several thousand men, and the guns of the Bastille at her disposal, the Queen was to order the Parliament to leave Paris. If they refused, or if the citizens lent themselves to a repetition of the Broussel riots, the Porte St. Antoine would be opened to let in the troops, and barricades would be dealt with by artillery. No untrained crowds could withstand such an advance. The army, driving back the mob before them, would soon have reached the heart of the city ; the Parliamentary leaders would be seized, and the King would once more be master in his own capital.

Such was Condé's suggestion ; a foreshadowing of that fight of St. Antoine which was to mark one of the great days of his life. But Mazarin, though he feared the Prince, feared bloodshed still more, and would neither give his own consent, nor allow the Queen to give hers. A few timid spirits asserted that the mere withdrawal of the Court from Paris would be enough, if persisted in, to quell all rebellion ; but it was obvious that months, if not years, must pass before such a scheme could take effect. The course of action finally agreed upon was a compromise ; more temperate than Condé's plan, but also, it must be confessed, less dignified. The King was not only to leave Paris ; he was to leave as a fugitive, travelling by night, with all the mystery of a conspiracy surrounding his movements. The Court was to be installed at St. Germain. The troops were to be reinforced, as Condé had intended ; but they were to do no more than form a cordon round the city walls, and cut off all convoys, from Gonesse or elsewhere. Rumours of this approaching force had already reached the Parliament, and in one of the December debates the councillor Coulon, ' grand frondeur ', spoke vehemently, to the effect that while they were wasting time in these unprofitable assemblies, an army was marching on Paris. The statement was true enough ; but Coulon was too ignorant of details to be able to prove it. He was

instantly attacked by M. le Prince, who demanded the name of the officer in charge of these forces. Coulon, taken unawares, could only give the obscure title of a certain Colonel David: "I have commanded the King's armies for many years", said the Prince, a veteran of seven-and-twenty, "but I never yet heard of a Colonel of that name". And, following up his advantage, he cast such ridicule upon the unfortunate Coulon and 'his unknown Colonel', that the whole report was more or less discredited.¹

While such means as these were used to banish suspicion, arrangements for the King's journey had been made in haste and secrecy. The time chosen was the night of January 5th-6th, when all good citizens would be engaged in celebrating the eve of Twelfth-Day, a festival much honoured in every class. Both at Court and in the city the air was full of rumours of a possible flight; for the secret was necessarily known to many, and fragments of the truth could not fail to leak out. Nevertheless, it was successfully contrived that the actual moment of starting should be unknown till the last. The Queen herself deceived her ladies with complete success. She received them at supper in her private rooms, where a twelfth-cake was cut for the amusement of the King and his brother, and healths were drunk in hippocras. She laughed at the reports of her departure, spoke much of the entertainments she was to give in Paris during the next few days, and finally retired, as usual, for the night. An hour or two later the whole palace was astir. The Royal children were snatched from their beds and hurriedly dressed. Messengers were dispatched to the Luxembourg and to the Hôtel de Condé, where the head of each House was expecting the summons; and in an incredibly short space of time, a bewildered crowd of ladies, children, and attendants had been marshalled into carriages, and the whole convoy had set forth. Princesses of all ages were there, from Madame la Princesse the Dowager to 'Mademoiselle de Valois',² the youngest infant daughter of Monsieur. Even in the agitation of the moment, at two in the morning, and in pitchy darkness, Mademoiselle de Montpensier did not forget to dispute a place of honour with the elder

¹ Duchesse de Nemours, *Mémoires*.

² Françoise-Madeleine d'Orléans; born October, 1648.

Princess of Condé ; but the Queen decided against her, and she yielded, observing pointedly "that she, being young, would give way to the old".¹ Madame de Longueville, whose rebel sympathies had till now been kept secret, refused to stir from Paris. La Rochefoucauld had communicated to her the state of their party, and she was only awaiting the first opportunity to take part openly with the Fronde. For the moment her health served as a convenient pretext, and there was no time to be lost in argument or persuasion. Conti, feebly resisting, was ordered off, like a child, by his formidable brother, and made the journey under strict supervision, in the Queen's own carriage. The Cardinal, eager for safety, was among the first on the road. Once fairly begun, the journey was marked by no incident. At daybreak, just as the citizens were awaking to discover their loss, the Queen alighted at St. Germain, and went, with the Princes and all her suite, to hear Mass in honour of the Epiphany.

All through that day, and for many succeeding days, the confusion and excitement were indescribable. At St. Germain the sense of adventure was heightened by the fact that no preparations could be made for the arrival of the Court, and that it had been practically impossible for most of the fugitives to bring luggage with them. There were no beds, no carpets, no curtains ; "even the King and Queen", Jean Vallier, the maître d'hôtel, writes, horror-stricken, "were without these necessities for their sacred persons". The windows were unglazed, and the weather was piercingly cold. Every hour fresh tidings arrived from Paris, brought sometimes by ladies or gentlemen of the Court making their escape to join the Queen ; sometimes by trusted servants, sent to fetch out what goods they could carry unobserved. This was the only safe way of conveying personal property ; for several waggon-loads, ordered to follow their owners, were set upon and pillaged by the crowd. The most adventurous journey was that of the Duchesse de Lesdiguières, who travelled in a cart, disguised as a peasant-woman ; but more than one Court lady passed through new and unpleasant experiences. Madame de Motteville and her sister, on their first effort to escape, were set upon by the mob and turned back, half-dead with fright ; their

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*, i. 197.

second, and successful, attempt was not made till many weeks later. Mademoiselle reaped great advantage, and a splendid opportunity for patronage, from her unfailing popularity with the Parisians. Her servants and carriages, alone, were allowed to pass unmolested; so that the Queen herself had recourse to them, with their mistress's permission, to bring a supply of clothing from the Palais-Royal.

Two days after the King's flight, deputations arrived, both from the Parliament and from the municipal authorities of the Hôtel de Ville, and implored the King's return in terms so moving, that all present, with the exception of the Queen and M. le Prince, were affected to tears. The only answer granted to these petitioners was, that the matter lay entirely in the hands of 'Messieurs du Parlement'. Paris, in the present state of affairs, could not hold both them and the King; if the Parliament would consent to withdraw, the Court might be reinstalled; but otherwise the town was no safe place of habitation. The negotiations were, in point of fact, purely formal; each side was actively preparing for war; and it remained only to be seen how many Princes and nobles would be won by hatred of Mazarin, admiration for Madame de Longueville, or any other private reason, to forsake their natural allegiance and become 'good Frondeurs'. Defections began to be nervously looked for at Court. More than once some great noble disappeared, giving an innocent pretext for spending a few hours in Paris, and was next heard of as offering his services to the Parliament. The Duc d'Elbœuf, of the House of Lorraine, was the first of these deserters; he had brought no money with him, he said, and must fetch what was needed. Then followed a bold and unexpected stroke: the departure of Conti and his brother-in-law, Longueville. Condé had seen to it that his family reached St. Germain in safety; but, once arrived, he had found it impossible to mount guard over them; his duties as Commander-in-Chief of the army about to surround Paris, occupied his time and took him to all the outlying suburbs in turn. Conti dared not disobey the 'grand frère' to his face, but he watched for an opportunity, which was not long in coming. M. le Prince was at Aubervilliers superintending the distribution of the troops, when, on

the morning of January 11th, the Princess Dowager appeared before the Queen, and falling on her knees exclaimed, with tears, that her younger son had turned traitor ; his sister had led him astray, and she could only entreat forgiveness for them both. Conti, Longueville, and La Rochefoucauld had left St. Germain during the night and travelled to Paris ; where, at that same moment, they were being received with joy by the Coadjutor. The Queen was at first dismayed ; not so much by the loss of these three renegades, as by the instant suspicion that Condé had connived at their escape, and that the expedition to Aubervilliers had been merely a cloak for his own desertion. But by evening all doubts were set at rest. M. le Prince arrived like a whirlwind ; furious that his orders should have been defied, and resenting Conti's action no less as a breach of family discipline, than as treason towards the Crown. His presence, his unmistakable wrath and astonishment, and the scorn he poured upon the whole party of the Parliament, acted like an enchantment on the drooping spirits of the Court. Mazarin was said to have been on the point of flight, but the Prince would hear of no such faint-hearted measures ; he assured the Cardinal of his protection, and declared that he would bring him, as well as the King, back to Paris in triumph. Soon all St. Germain adopted his tone, and scoffed at the rebels ; till it was considered the height of absurdity and bad taste to speak of the war as a matter for serious concern.

Condé's personal revenge on the offending members of his family was entirely characteristic. After a blaze of anger he collected himself, put on an air of complete unconcern, and began steadily and mercilessly to hold them up to derision. Conti's position gave ample occasion for such gibes. He who, till now, had been allowed no rôle but that of the submissive 'little brother'—the prospective cleric—suddenly found himself a hero in the sight of all the people of Paris, and was elated beyond measure at the change. To the frondeurs, the winning of even the least among Princes of the Blood was a triumph indeed ! All the honours that could be devised were showered upon him, beginning with that of Généralissime of the Army of Paris ; the citizen army of train-bands, and militia regiments, which was being hastily levied, under a

banner bearing the device, 'Regem nostrum quaerimus'. In return, Conti posed extravagantly as the defender of the people's rights; encouraged by a flood of panegyric writings: 'Éloge de Monseigneur le Prince de Conti'; 'Armandus Armans', and so forth. Even more gratifying was the jealousy of Elbœuf; who, arriving two days earlier in Paris, had been appointed General, only to find himself supplanted on the first appearance of a prince of higher rank. It would be hard to say whether the idea of this burgher army, or that of his brother as its Commander-in-Chief, appeared more supremely ludicrous to the mind of M. le Prince. Nothing gave him, and his chief associates, greater delight than the news that Retz, notwithstanding his profession, had raised a regiment of cavalry in his own name, to be called, after his titular Archbishopric, the 'regiment of Corinth'. Gramont, about to take up his post with the troops at St. Cloud, begged his officers to catch him a 'Corinthian', if they could find one, that he might see what manner of creature it was. Conti was spared at no point; even his physical disadvantages were turned to account, and many were the taunts levelled at his crooked back and small stature. Condé, passing one day through a crowded ante-room of the palace, saw a tame monkey chained up to the fire-place, and saluted the animal respectfully: 'Serviteur au Généralissime des Parisiens!'¹

The frondeurs were not behindhand in mockery; they answered by attacks on the Queen and the Cardinal, till the 'Mazarinades' became a literature in themselves. The Prince, for his share, was besieged by open letters, railing against his support of Mazarin, which was represented as the height of disloyalty to the King. Remonstrances, in prose and in verse, were showered upon him; some serious and patriotic; some frankly scurrilous; but mostly pointing out that, in his present position, he had everything to lose and nothing to gain:

"Condé, quelle sera ta gloire
Quand tu gagneras la victoire
Sur le juge et sur le marchand?
Veux-tu faire dire à ta mère,
'Ah, que mon grand fils est méchant!
Il a battu son petit frère!'"

¹ Montglat, *Mémoires*.

As for Monsieur, his name plays a small part in poems and pamphlets, considering the station he occupied ; but that the Parisians had fairly gauged his attitude is evident from certain verses, in which France is represented as calling to him for help, and receiving his placid answer :

“ ‘ Va, France, loin de moi gémir ’,
Lui dit Gaston ; ‘ Je veux dormir ;
Je naquis en dormant. J’y veux passer ma vie.
Jamais de m’éveiller il ne me prit envie.
Toi, ma femme, et ma fille, y perdez vos efforts ;
Je dors ’ ”.

Mademoiselle’s vain attempts to infuse some of her own high spirit into her father’s actions were an open secret. Madame was a less well-known and less popular figure ; but, as a Princess of Lorraine, she was never slow to take up a quarrel against a Bourbon King.

Condé, for all his laughter, went to work on the investment of Paris with no less professional care and vigour than was his custom. Gramont was posted between St. Cloud and Meudon to hold the road from Orleans ; the Duc de Noailles, captain of the King’s Guards, at Corbeil, to cut off supplies arriving by river ; and the Marshal du Plessis at St. Denis. The Parisians disdainfully commended the besieging force to these local Saints—

“ Qu’ils prient bien, nos ennemis,
St. Germain, St. Cloud, St. Denis,
Nous avons pour nous Notre-Dame ! ”

Never, so his officers admitted, had the Prince worked them or himself harder than in these winter months ; day and night they followed him, over roads heavy with snow, and marvelled at the sheer nervous force that sustained him. Twelve thousand men seemed few indeed, when the whole of Paris had to be surrounded ; and the state of the frontier, together with signs of revolt in the provinces, made it impossible to draw further reinforcements from either source. But what was lacking in numbers, Condé did his utmost to make up in energy. Before many days had passed, the citizens of the lower class looked on him as neither more nor less than a demon of cruelty and activity. Legends were circulated of his terrifying habits—as that he lived, by preference, on the ears of the people of Paris, which

his soldiers cut off and brought to him ; a notion which amused him so much that he encouraged it rather than otherwise.

Within the walls of the city was the 'army of Paris', between twenty and thirty thousand strong ; beautiful to behold, and daily paraded in the sight of the inhabitants. The Commander-in-Chief reviewed his forces every few days, and the ladies, especially, admired their courageous bearing, and the ribbons on their uniforms. Each hour seemed to add to the ascendancy of the 'frondeuses', who thoroughly enjoyed their situation, and suffered no more hardship during the siege than was necessary to create an agreeable feeling of heroism.¹ The passion for political influence, which had succeeded the literary ambitions of the 'précieuses', was now fairly alight. Madame de Longueville and her stepdaughter were in Paris from the first ; so also was the Duchesse de Bouillon,² whose power over her husband was chiefly responsible for his secession from the Court. Longueville had the happy inspiration of sending his wife and family to lodge at the Hôtel de Ville, and declaring them the hostages of his good faith with the Parliament. Bouillon did the like ; and there followed the well-known scene described by Retz, who fully appreciated both its humour and its practical value ; when these two ladies, "both beautiful as the day, and even more beautiful for appearing dishevelled (though in reality they were not so), stood with their children on the steps of the Hôtel de Ville, in a group so touching that the crowd cheered, and wept, to see them". No opportunity was missed for appealing to popular sentiment. The christening of Madame de Longueville's younger son—born in January, 1650, at the Hôtel de Ville—was made the occasion of a great public rejoicing. Le Féron, 'prévôt des marchands', representing the City of Paris, stood godfather to the little Prince, with Madame de Bouillon as godmother ; and the name chosen was 'Charles-Paris'.³

¹ "A Paris, pendant la famine,
La plus belle se contentait,
D'un simple boisson de farine".

² Eléonore de Bergh ; married to Frédéric-Maurice de la Tour d'Auvergne, Duc de Bouillon, elder brother of Turenne.

³ Charles-Paris d'Orléans, Comte de Dunois ; killed at the passage of the Rhine, 1672.

Conti, as Généralissime, could show, among the names of his officers many of the highest in France ; Luynes, Brissac, Bouillon, La Rochefoucauld, and La Trémoille, Duc de Noirmoutiers. But of all the triumphs of the Fronde, none was greater, or, in a sense, more deplorable, than the conquest of Turenne. The Duc de Bouillon,—the Marshal's elder brother, and the head of his House,—had early transferred his allegiance. Condé, knowing the strength of family influence, wrote instantly to Turenne, who at that time was still in Alsace with the 'army of the Rhine'; urging on him his duty, and at the same time professing entire confidence in him : " I can almost answer for you that you will not be shaken by this news, and that you will persist in your loyalty to the King and Queen. I think, too, that consideration for me may have some weight with you ".¹ Turenne's embarrassed answer shows that the appeal was not without effect ; twice he speaks of his deep regret at having had no personal interview on the subject with the Prince,—“ for you know my heart, in all that concerns you ” ; but even had the meeting been possible, it may be doubted whether Condé's persuasions could have triumphed over those of Bouillon and Madame de Longueville. To Mazarin, the Marshal wrote in plainer and less respectful terms, intimating that no support was to be looked for from him ; and so completely was he dominated by his new allegiance, that only prompt action on the Cardinal's part saved the whole army of the Rhine from being marched to the relief of Paris. Turenne's disaffection was no sooner made known than sums of money were forwarded, and promises scattered broadcast, both to officers and men ; pensions and rewards were offered to all who were found faithful to the King. Erlach, Governor of Brisach, was ordered to summon the troops to join him, and declare himself their Commander-in-Chief. As a result, Turenne had scarcely crossed the frontier into France before he found himself deserted by his army, and was forced to retreat into Holland, where he awaited the conclusion of peace.

Thus the Fronde gained little or no practical advantage from having led one of the King's greatest subjects to brand himself a rebel. Failing the presence of Turenne, the Generals of Paris were more conspicuous for social rank and for number than for efficiency.

¹ A.C., 1649.

Some few did not lack experience, and had served in campaigns under Condé himself ; among them, Noirmoutiers, who had joined the Fronde out of pique, never having forgiven certain words addressed to him by the Prince after the disorder on the morning of Lens ; and Lillebonne, the second of Elbœuf's three sons, who had enrolled himself beside his father and brothers. Longueville had departed to raise further support in Normandy, where he ruled as Governor ; but there remained, besides the officers already named, Beaufort, La Mothe-Houdancourt,¹ and La Boulaye, a connection and protégé of Bouillon, all demanding important posts. Each felt that his consent to serve conferred a favour on the citizen army ; and it needed all the Coadjutor's skill, and all Molé's firmness and courage, to deal with their countless and bewildering jealousies. There seems to have been no formal declaration of war ; but hostilities may be said to have begun on January 13th, when La Tremblay, Governor of the Bastille, surrendered his fortress at Bouillon's summons. This first success of the 'frondeurs' was not soon to be repeated. The occasional sorties made by one or other of their many Generals were conducted, as a rule, with extreme caution, but were not often glorious to the army of Paris, most of whose regiments had never learnt to stand fire. On January 29th was fought the skirmish known profanely to the Court as 'First Corinthians' ; when the Coadjutor's horsemen, commanded by a near kinsman of his own, fled ignominiously before a detachment of Condé's troops, without even waiting to engage. But in spite of this and other humiliating incidents, the King's cause was by no means always in the ascendant. The chief advantage of the besieged lay in the sympathy felt for them by the inhabitants of all the country for miles round Paris. Despoiled and terrorised by Condé's soldiers, the peasants feared and hated him no less than did the citizens, and secretly gave his enemies all the help in their power. More than one convoy was passed in by their means ; for not even Condé could watch every road in person. There were also the 'hotteurs' ; peasants who came in singly, with baskets, or 'hottes', full of provisions, which they sold to great advantage in the town. News of the triumph which greeted the arrival of each

¹ Duc de Cardone ; see Chapter IX.

convoy, and of the victorious airs assumed by such commanders as Beaufort and La Boulaye, who were acclaimed as conquerors for having driven in a few sheep or oxen, gave M. le Prince infinite entertainment, and many good stories wherewith to amuse the Queen ;¹ nevertheless, as some of the Court observed, even while they joined in the ridicule, the Parisians did unquestionably gain their end, and delay matters, by these mock-heroic exploits.

After three weeks of exhausting, though almost bloodless, warfare, Condé found occasion for a decisive stroke. One post on the outskirts of Paris was held for the Fronde by a force whose men and officers alike could boast professional training. Clanleu, *maréchal-de-camp*, had served in the King's army for close on fifteen years, had lost Dixmuyden to the Spaniards in the campaign of 1647, and, believing himself unjustly treated by the Government, had joined the Parliament in revenge. He was now firmly established in the town, or rather village, of Charenton, holding open the river Marne, at the point of junction with the Seine. Under him were two thousand, or more, deserters from different regiments, all tried and experienced in war ; the real nucleus of the citizen army, and the only troops whose resistance need be taken seriously into account. If Charenton could be seized, and Clanleu's force dispersed, the Parisians must surely be brought to surrender. Three thousand men were told off for the attack, and to Châtillon was given the coveted distinction of leading them. The Prince had asked a Marshal's baton for him, after Lens, but the Queen still hesitated to grant it ; and this exploit was to turn the scale in his favour. On February 7th, in a night of fog and hard frost, Châtillon's infantry were concentrated in the Forest of Vincennes, preparing to reach Charenton at daybreak. Condé, with a force of between two and three thousand cavalry, was to take up his position on the rising ground by Conflans, between Charenton and Paris ; he was not without hope that the citizens might sally out to Clanleu's assistance, and that their warlike pretensions might be once for all demolished. But, much as he despised them, he had reckoned their courage too high. The army of Paris was indeed warned of his movements by a peasant spy ; one of the ' *hotteurs* ',

¹ Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

who, coming from Gonesse by night, saw Condé's troops marching from Vincennes with torches, through the fog, and hurried in to give the alarm. The drums of the city beat to arms, and at daylight twenty thousand men, commanded by Elbœuf, marched out of the gates amidst a scene of wild enthusiasm. Their career was short and ignominious. From the outskirts of the fortifications they gained a first distant view of the Royal cavalry, drawn up in line. At the sight, and at the thought of the terrible Prince who was to meet them, their spirit failed; the greater number turned and beat a retreat into Paris. The rest made no further advance, but waited, where they stood, till evening, and then returned to their quarters; when even the townspeople received them with anger and derision. The rear-guard, it was said, went no farther than the Place Royale,¹ and spent their time in contemplating the statue of Louis XIII, then newly erected, which stands there to this day.

If in Paris there was farce, there was stern reality at Charenton. Clanleu had fortified the whole village, barricading the streets; so that even when all outer defences were destroyed, the town was still not won. Châtillon ordered a charge on the barricades, and prepared to lead it himself, in spite of remonstrances from his friend Chavagnac, who vainly represented that this was no duty for an officer of his rank. The charge was made; so vigorously, that five barricades were carried. Then came a check, and a hand-to-hand fight, in a street leading to the river, where Clanleu himself was posted with a handful of men; a struggle under difficulties, for the ground was slippery with ice. Clanleu was beaten back, refusing to yield; "he would sooner die there", he said, "than on the scaffold as a rebel". Châtillon, in the moment of victory, was shot through the spine by a musket-ball fired from a window. Mortally wounded, he was still conscious, and ordered Persan, second in command, to lead another charge. Persan obeyed, and the men, who had seen their leader fall, needed no bidding to avenge him. Streets and houses were cleared of defenders; Clanleu was killed and his force annihilated; some few only escaped, crossing the river by boats, or even on floating pieces of ice.

¹ Now called the Place des Vosges.

Châtillon was carried to Vincennes, where the Prince, arriving in haste from Conflans, was met by the news that his friend's life was despaired of, and gave way to an agony of grief as uncontrolled as all his other emotions. The dying man lingered for a day and a night ; and during those hours Condé scarcely left him. The Duchess Isabelle, hurriedly summoned, came in time to see her husband alive, and to hear him ask her forgiveness ; for Châtillon, as inconstant as he was brave and gifted, had passed through more than one great passion since the time of his romantic elopement ; and on the day that he fell, wore round his arm, as a token, the blue ribbon garter of Mademoiselle de Guerchy, most beautiful of the Queen's maids-of-honour. Of all the ' damoiseaux ' of Chantilly who had grown up with him, Condé had valued none more than Châtillon ; and in Paris the loss was interpreted as the judgment of Heaven falling on the Prince for his support of Mazarin. Pamphlets were published, with every detail, real or imagined, of the death-bed ; and it was persistently asserted that Châtillon in his last moments had solemnly addressed M. le Prince, assuring him that he died his true servant, and commending all family interests to his care ; but above all, imploring him to amend his way of life, and to desert the Cardinal, " who was a scoundrel, unworthy of such protection ". The violence of Condé's grief was short-lived ; it was the extravagant emotion of an over-wrought, undisciplined nature. At the first moment he was so much overcome as to seem incapable of thought or action ; but according to Bussy, who was serving under him, " he knew well that it was unfitting for a General in command of an army to appear sorrowful and dejected " ; and since, in such matters, he was never known to take a middle course, he went, twelve hours afterwards, to supper with his officers, and caroused with them as though he had not a care in the world. Only, when a few days later Châtillon was buried with great pomp at St. Denis, the Prince, whose hard-heartedness was the talk of Paris, stood among the mourners, with tears running down his face ; a fact considered worthy of record in the Registers of the Hôtel de Ville. All the Court lamented this last worthy scion of the great House of Coligny, and the resentment rose so high

against Mazarin, who was held responsible for the war, that for a short time he scarcely dared to show himself even at St. Germain. Madame de Châtillon was perhaps among the least afflicted at her husband's death. Since their marriage, her flirtations had been almost as notorious as his ; and the ladies who paid her visits of condolence, noted indignantly that she was dressed with far more elaboration than her mourning required ! Her influence over Condé had not yet developed ; even the easy moral code of the time had recognised his friendship with Châtillon as a barrier ; but her beauty and intellect needed nothing save opportunity to prove irresistible.

The fight at Charenton was the only serious encounter in the ' war of Paris '. Before the end of February the ardour both of the besieged and besieging forces had considerably cooled. The Parisians were out of conceit with their troops, whom they perceived to be useless, as well as expensive to maintain ; and the poorer citizens were suffering genuine privations. On the other hand, the officers of the King's army were thoroughly tired of the siege, which provided a maximum of work with a minimum of distinction. " If you do not die immediately of hunger, we shall all die very soon of exhaustion ", wrote the incorrigible Bussy to his cousin, Madame de Sévigné ; " and moreover, I have the greatest impatience to see you. If Mazarin had a cousin like you in Paris, either I am much mistaken, or peace would be made at any price ". Certainly it was proved that the Fronde had no troops able to stand before Condé ; Brie-Comte-Robert, another outpost of the city, was captured on February 10th. But it was not upon the ' army of Paris ', nor even upon the growing disaffection in the provinces, that Retz and his most favoured associates relied for support. They had already, for some weeks, been in active communication with the Archduke. A secret envoy, in the shape of a Bernardine friar, had actually arrived in Paris ; and Retz, aided and abetted by Bouillon, his chief tool, had disguised this messenger as a Spanish nobleman, and presented him to the Parliament as an ambassador. The imposture was a success, inasmuch as it alarmed the Queen and the Cardinal, but the Coadjutor, on this occasion, had overreached himself ; for the more moderate party

in the Parliament shrank from such an extreme measure as treating, in their own name, with a hostile foreign power. Molé's patriotism revolted, and, notwithstanding opposition from Conti, Beaufort, and Elbœuf, peace negotiations with the Court were resolutely set on foot. Monsieur, dissatisfied with the small share of importance that had fallen to him during the war, was now once more foremost in the reception of deputations. Briefly, the Parisians were bent upon the King's return, but demanded Mazarin's banishment ; whereas the Queen was resolved not to set foot in Paris except with her minister in attendance. Neither party was strong enough to impose its own terms without compromise ; but both were sufficiently anxious for peace to be willing to concede a few points. The nobles of the Fronde, led by Beaufort, were vehemently opposed to any peace with the Sicilian tyrant ; but their outcry was mainly prompted by a determination to sell their submission as dearly as possible. Their special representative, the Comte de Maure, arrived at St. Germain at the close of the deliberations, uttering threats and protests so extravagant that they could only be received with ridicule ; and the Court rang with the ' triolets ' which Condé himself was believed to have improvised :

"C'est un tigre affamé de sang,
Que ce brave Comte de Maure ;
Quand il combat au premier rang,
C'est un tigre affamé de sang.
Mais il ne s'y trouve pas souvent ;
C'est pourquoi Condé vit encore.
C'est un tigre affamé de sang,
Que ce brave Comte de Maure".

The nobles had purposely chosen an envoy of serious mind, who played his part with genuine conviction ; but they had no real expectation of Mazarin's dismissal. Maure was instructed to declare that if the ' enemy of the State ' were banished, every Prince or noble would submit unconditionally. Failing this, a list was to be put forward of the individual terms demanded by each frondeur of rank or consideration ; terms as shamelessly rapacious and self-seeking as could well be imagined. These, with a few exceptions, were granted ; while the Parliament, as a body, when the Peace of Rueil was signed on March 12th, gained

nothing but a repetition, in slightly modified form, of the Declaration of October.

The House of Condé benefited largely through the conditions granted to Conti and Longueville. The name of Turenne, unfortunately for his reputation, figures among the rest ; but his character for loyalty was gradually re-established, thanks, in part, to Condé's energetic representations : " I can assure you that I have sounded M. de Turenne on all points, and found nothing but the most honest and sincere feelings of a good subject of the King ".¹ The Marshal, on arriving at Court, went first to M. le Prince, as to his protector, and was presented by him to the King and to the Cardinal. The Court had so far triumphed that Mazarin continued in power, but his position had never been less secure ; he was more than ever dependent on Condé, whose personal feelings towards him were merged in the determination to prove his own authority. Mazarin might be despicable, a coward, and a foreigner ; but the Prince had sworn to make the Parisians accept him, if only as a punishment to them. The words were a boast rather than a promise, and as such were the more bound to be fulfilled.

The Queen showed no haste in returning to Paris, where, at first, she might have met with a somewhat unfavourable reception ; for the citizens, hearing that Mazarin still reigned, cried out that the Parliament had betrayed them. Pamphlets and ' vaudevilles ' were more than ever coarse and insulting ; and Retz, whose policy was to punish attacks on the Queen, while encouraging those on the Cardinal, found it impossible to make a distinction between the two. The Court withdrew to Compiègne, and Condé to his government of Burgundy. A suggestion that he should resume the command in Flanders, tentatively put forward by Mazarin, met with no favour in his eyes ; for it appeared that the only enterprise to be sanctioned was the siege of Cambrai, which he judged impracticable. He returned to his civil duties ; while his substitute, the Comte d'Harcourt, who undertook the siege, was forced to raise it after ten days. The formal reconciliation with Conti and with Madame de Longueville took place, by mutual agreement, at Chaillot, a country house of the Comte de Bassompierre ; Condé went, alone, to meet his

¹ Condé to Mazarin, *A.C.*, July, 1649.

brother and sister, talked with them for two hours, and finally rode back to Paris by the side of Madame de Longueville's carriage. "But they still fear some treachery on his part", wrote the Princess Palatine to the Queen of Poland, "for he hates them".¹ Conti submitted under protest to the loss of his late dignity, and found himself once more treated as a schoolboy; forced, not without 'beaucoup de grimaces', to dine at the King's table, with Mazarin as a fellow-guest. The Cardinal, obsequious by nature, left nothing undone, outwardly, to ingratiate himself with the frondeurs on their reappearance at Court; all the while dreading nothing so much as the State entry into Paris, which he foresaw to be inevitable. 'La Palatine', in her letter, adds that a date has been fixed for the return of the Court, but that "the Cardinal is in such fear, that they may possibly change their plans, and, to tell the truth, I believe he may really run some risk". Thus the summer passed; till at length it was evident that the journey, however dangerous, could not be indefinitely delayed. The people called for their King with ceaseless persistence, and it was clear that further postponement might bring about a renewal of war; in addition, Condé, tired of fulfilling civil duties at Dijon, reappeared at Compiègne, full of impatience to make good his word. His urgency carried the day. On August 17th the King and Queen left Compiègne; and on the evening of the next day nearly the whole population of Paris sallied out, with tumultuous rejoicing, to escort them into the town. 'La personne du Roi' was restored to his subjects, and all else was forgotten; the Queen was as loudly acclaimed as her son. The long hours spent on the road; the heat, the noise, and the overpowering enthusiasm of the crowd, are feelingly recorded by Mademoiselle de Montpensier, who was one of no fewer than eight persons travelling in the Queen's coach. Never, so Mademoiselle affirms, had she passed through a more trying experience; not even the gratification of the triumph could atone for its intense discomfort. Most demonstrative of all were the fishwives, or 'harengères', who surrounded the Queen and laid hands on her, promising her their undying devotion, and showering blessings on the King, whose boyish

¹ A.C., August, 1649.

good looks and perfect self-possession filled the crowd with delight. Among the frantic shouts of 'Vive le Roi! la Reine!' another cry was heard—'Voilà le Mazarin!'—as the Cardinal was seen at the window of the Royal carriage; and, facing him, the unmistakable silhouette of M. le Prince. Mazarin had taken the precaution of sending money, beforehand, to be distributed among the people in his name; and either for this reason, or because of the august company in which he travelled, he met with no ill-usage; there were even a few cries of 'Vive le Cardinal!'

Condé, taking leave of the King and Queen that evening at the Palais-Royal, expressed himself happy at having fulfilled his promise. The Queen answered before the whole Court: "You have done such service to my son and myself, that we should indeed be ungrateful if we could ever forget it". As he left the Palace one of the Prince's household, well versed in Court politics, observed to him that he had laid the Crown under too great an obligation, and that he would be in danger of suffering for it: "Certainly I shall", answered Condé, who at that moment felt able to defy the machinations of either Court or Parliament, "but I have done as I said!"

CHAPTER XIII

CONDÉ AND MAZARIN

1649-50

THE reconciliation at Chaillot was more sincere and lasting than the Princess Palatine had foreseen. Policy and family feeling, on this occasion, worked to the same end. For his brother, Condé had indeed no feeling save contempt; but Madame de Longueville, in spite of quarrels, had never entirely lost her influence over him. The House of Condé, thus reunited, faced the world from the centre of a small circle of intimates; envied, feared, and hated. The society led by Madame de Longueville, and chiefly frequented by M. le Prince, consisted practically of the Chantilly clique, in a later stage of development; shorn of many graces, now that politics had usurped the place of literature, but still keeping all the exclusiveness and intolerance which have distinguished such cliques since the beginning of time. Condé, thanks to his habit of ridicule and the 'unruly evil' of his tongue, was a past-master in the art of making enemies; and all his faction followed suit, recklessly insolent, in the hour of their leader's triumph. "They held it ludicrous to make any effort to please", so Mademoiselle de Longueville writes of her stepmother's family; "they put on such mocking airs, and made such insulting comments, that no one could endure them. If they received visitors, it was with a manner so openly bored and contemptuous as to make it plain that they only wished to be rid of them. Those who came for an audience of M. le Prince, whatever their rank, were kept waiting, sometimes for hours, in his ante-room; and often, in the end, he sent the whole company away, and saw no one. . . . But if the hatred they inspired was great, the fear of them was still greater; so much so, that it could only be

realised by those who had seen it".¹ Members of Condé's own household felt their position to be perilous indeed. His gentlemen-in-waiting were mostly chosen for their wits; but woe betide them if a lively humour carried them too far! St. Évremond had lost his post not long since, when, after an evening spent in conversation with M. le Prince, he propounded to the Duc de Rohan the suggestion that "the spirit of ridicule, carried to excess, made those who indulged in it themselves ridiculous". That word was one which Condé, like others of his disposition, never suffered to be applied to himself. The offender's dismissal followed promptly; and though the interrupted friendship was presently repaired, other circumstances prevented his ever holding office again. During the Fronde, St. Évremond served against the Prince's party with both sword and pen; but it is fair to add that, of M. le Prince himself, he writes with admiration, and with no apparent sense of injury.

Towards Mazarin, Condé bore himself every day with more open disdain; the Cardinal could frame no scheme, in public or private matters, without dreading lest M. le Prince might see fit, as the onlookers said, to 'faire le méchant'. Even the Queen he treated with scant respect, as her dependence on Mazarin grew more apparent. Mademoiselle, still cherishing a dutiful aversion for the head of a rival House, found his long-standing disregard of her claims less tolerable than ever. She had been ill of small-pox in the course of the summer; and the Prince not only omitted to send formal inquiries at the time, but, when she reappeared at Court, rallied her, making light of her illness, and telling her that he believed it had been feigned. Mademoiselle had not much more liking for being laughed at than Condé himself. "I did not receive the joke well", she says with dignity, "and he observed it"; but it may be doubted whether his pleasure in it was thereby diminished. To the King alone Condé, as became a true Bourbon, was unfailingly deferential; although Louis, at ten years old, felt some awe of his cousin, and was not prepared to assert his own rights. One day, at Compiègne, M. le Prince, on his way to visit the Queen, passed through the room where the King, with a tutor, was at lessons. Louis

¹ Duchesse de Nemours, *Mémoires*.

at once left his seat and stood talking to the Prince, hat in hand. Laporte, the confidential servant in attendance, was much perturbed; and, after vainly urging the tutor to protest, ventured to whisper to the King to put on his hat. "Laporte is right, Sire", said Condé, "Your Majesty should be covered. You do us enough honour by returning our salute". Already he had shown a keen interest in the character of this boy who was to rule him; soon after his return from the campaign of Lens, he took occasion to question the Abbé de Beaumont, one of the King's teachers, and asked him, very seriously, for a true and detailed account of his Royal pupil. Beaumont gave emphatic assurance that the King would not disappoint any of the great hopes founded on him. "I am glad of it", answered Condé briefly, "because there is no pleasure to be had in obeying a fool".¹

The Queen spared no pains to encourage the outward impression made by her son's triumphal entry into Paris. On the Feast of St. Louis (August 26th), the King went in state to hear Mass at the Jesuit Church in the Rue St. Antoine; and a procession was organised, with great pomp and elaboration. The success was brilliant; Louis, on horseback, wearing a pearl-grey coat with silver embroidery, and attended by all the chief officers of the Court, was even more irresistible than in a state coach. The Princes and nobles who escorted him, rose to the occasion, and vied with each other in gorgeousness; special attention was claimed by the Duc de Richelieu, in cloth of gold, and the Comte de St. Aignan, in flame-colour. Among them all, no figure was more striking, in bearing and equipment, than that of M. le Prince, who rode, with his brother, immediately before the King. Condé was not, and had never been, loved by the people of Paris; and, since the late war, his appearance had not infrequently been greeted with open execrations. But their dislike and fear of him gave way, for the moment, to admiration; and, like the citizens of Barcelona at the famous 'carrousel', they acclaimed a splendour as unquestioned as it was rare. The Prince—to quote the language of the *Gazette*—"wore a coat of green, covered with gold and silver embroideries, of matchless beauty"; and even his horse, in trappings

¹ Laporte, *Mémoires*.

of the same green and gold, "seemed proud that he had served his master in more than one great battle". Possibly Condé's very indifference to the crowd may have helped to make his presence impressive; for he had paid scarcely any heed to their abuse, and was little moved by their favour.

Monsieur had not exposed himself to the dangers of being outshone. As usual, he was dissatisfied with the place allotted to him in the ceremony; maintaining his right to ride alone, instead of, as the Queen wished, in line with the other two Princes of the Blood; and, sooner than submit, he absented himself altogether, on a hunting expedition to Limours. He returned, however, in time for a great festivity given by the 'prévôt des marchands', and all the city dignitaries, in honour of the King's birthday (September 5th). Louis and all his Court were magnificently received at the Hôtel de Ville, with feasting, dancing, and a display of fireworks. The supper was a true civic banquet, "superb and abundant, with all manner of fruits and confectionery"; and the guests, unaccustomed to such luxuries in the King's household, no doubt did full justice to it. The whole entertainment, with the exception of the fireworks, took place in daylight, by the Queen's special request. Those who were most in her confidence knew that, in spite of all loyal demonstrations, she was afraid for the King's safety, at midnight, in the streets of his capital; but, lest her fears should be suspected, she preferred to tell her ladies that she had expressed the wish out of malice; certain 'frondeuses', she said, wore too much rouge to enjoy appearing in full Court dress, except by artificial light.¹ Mesdames de Chevreuse and de Montbazon may have felt the punishment; but Madame de Longueville was many years younger than the Queen herself, and her beauty was not likely to suffer. Fortunately, the weather was cool for the season; otherwise, dancing at midday might have been a heavy penance for all alike. The King led out Mademoiselle for the first 'branle'; and his brother of Anjou, the little daughter of Madame de Montbazon. Condé's partner was Charlotte de Lorraine, 'Mademoiselle de Chevreuse', who, with her mother, had returned to France after the Peace of Rueil, and whose beauty was being eagerly

¹ Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

exploited by her parents, in the hope of some princely marriage. The 'courante' was led by the King with Madame le Féron, wife of the Prévôt des Marchands, and the day passed with many compliments, and great satisfaction on all hands. The stream of printed attacks on the Queen and Mazarin had never been wholly checked, but it was for a short time overborne by songs of jubilation on the King's return, and the preparations made by his subjects :

"Sus, qu'on aille arroser le Cours !¹
 Qu'on fasse boire la poussière !
 Pour y promener les Amours,
 Sus qu'on aille arroser le Cours !
 L'on y fera tantôt des tours,
 Tant que durera la lumière"—

Condé figures as the hero who has restored the King to his people ; in the " Triolets de Joie, chantés par la Ville de Paris ", all the Royal family are toasted in turn—the King, the Queen, Monsieur, Madame, Mademoiselle ; and lastly, comes a special stanza for M. le Prince :

"Cher Condé, c'est de tout mon cœur
 Que je veux boire à Votre Altesse !
 Permettez-le moi, grand vainqueur,
 Cher Condé, c'est de tout mon cœur ;
 Je n'ai plus ni mal, ni peur,
 Voici pour noyer ma tristesse—
 Cher Condé, c'est de tout mon cœur,
 À Votre Altesse !"

All these surface rejoicings could not hide the fact that the nobles of the Fronde were still making every effort to strengthen their position ; helped by their nominal repentance, which gave them free access to the Court. Scarcely one among them was disinterested ; but, while their motives differed endlessly, the one common aim and object which held the whole party together was the downfall of Mazarin. Their efforts to win over Condé began afresh, with renewed vigour and increased hopes of success. Eight months of enforced partisanship with Mazarin had done their work ; the Prince and the Cardinal were by nature so radically antipathetic to each other, that an open breach between them could now only be a question of time. Even in the interval between the signing of

¹ The Cours-la-Reine, the favourite 'promenade' of the Court.

peace and the King's entry into Paris, several grave difficulties had arisen. The correspondence of the time shows a sordid and inextricable tangle of public and private affairs; marriages, Church preferment, civil and military appointments, all governed by the personal interests of Ministers and heads of Houses; and all transactions obscured by elaborate systems of spying and corruption. The dispute which touched Mazarin most nearly concerned the marriage of his niece, Laure Mancini, eldest of the five noted sisters,¹ to the Duc de Mercœur, heir of the House of Vendôme. The Duc de Vendôme, and Mercœur himself, were eager for the match; but Beaufort, the younger son, played the part of a good frondeur, and did all in his power to hinder this alliance with 'the Sicilian'. Condé took for granted that his own approval was necessary, and was, at first, prepared to give it; but later, perceiving that Mazarin and the Vendôme Princes might afford each other too much support, he retracted, and threatened all the penalties of his displeasure. His decision was strengthened by the report that the Admiralty appointment, refused to the House of Condé, was now to be bestowed on Vendôme. Entreaties were wasted on him by the Cardinal, and also by the intended bridegroom; an amiable, but slow-witted young man, who drew the ridicule of the whole Court upon himself by imploring M. le Prince, of all people, to use influence with Beaufort, and make him withdraw his opposition! The Princes of Vendôme were notoriously illiterate; so much so, that their faults of language were a constant source of amusement. Mercœur, who was genuinely in love with the beautiful Mancini, shed tears before Condé, and made bitter complaints of Beaufort, vowing to disown him: "Je ne le verrons jamais, Monsieur; ni mon père, ni moi!" Goulas, recording the incident, observes that neither the phrase nor the tears were soon allowed to be forgotten.²

Mazarin's attitude, in dealing with the Prince,

¹ Laure, Olympe, Marie, Hortense, and Marianne Mancini were the daughters of the Cardinal's younger sister. They were brought from Rome to Paris to be educated, and to gain the advantages of their uncle's position. With them came also the two daughters of Madame Martinozzi, Mazarin's elder sister. All the seven nieces played more or less important parts in the society of their time.

² The marriage of Mercœur and Laure Mancini eventually took place at Brühl, during Mazarin's exile from Court in 1651. Madame de Mercœur died in 1657, at the age of twenty-two.

shows a curious mixture of fear and determination. Face to face with him, he trembled ; his dread of violence, in word or deed, was even ludicrously apparent. Yet this terror, which Condé loved to provoke, was a purely physical affection. The Cardinal's policy was little, if at all, influenced by it ; he might quail for a moment, but in political skill and tenacity he was more than a match for his adversary. Shortly after his return to Paris he resolved, since Condé's sanction was obstinately withheld, to make the bold experiment of doing without it. He was afraid, however, to utter his decision to the Prince, and laid the message on Le Tellier ; who was to explain, in the most civil and deprecating manner possible, that the marriage had been arranged ; that the Cardinal would still be ready to consider the interests of M. le Prince before any others ; and that as the Queen had given her consent, it was hoped that his would no longer be refused. The errand was duly discharged. Condé, after a moment's displeasure, reflected that Mazarin would probably be willing to pay for a peaceful agreement, and decided to yield, on conditions. He waited till the messenger had finished his announcement and his explanations ; and then asked him, very gravely : " But what of that great Prince, of whom M. le Cardinal is so strangely afraid ? He is dead, I suppose. Well, this is a good revenge upon him ". Then, to Le Tellier's great relief, he laughed, and took the interview in good part, saying that the Queen's word must be final. Nevertheless, he was secretly determined that Mazarin should suffer for withstanding him ; and the price he asked for his consent immediately gave rise to a fresh series of intrigues and disturbances.

The House of Condé, like other princely families of the time, was seldom known to lose any temporal advantage through want of asking for it. The terms demanded by Conti and Longueville at the Peace of Rueil, had been exorbitant, to say the least ; but, under the stress of the moment, all had been promised, and a fair proportion had already been granted. One possession, much coveted for Longueville by the whole faction, was still in abeyance : the governorship of Pont-de-l'Arche, a fortified town in Normandy. Longueville, as Governor of the province, had in his gift the governorships of Rouen, Caen, and Dieppe, all of

which, needless to say, had been bestowed on trustworthy supporters of his own, and of the House of Condé. Pont-de-l'Arche, on the Seine, above Rouen, could not fail to be the key to an important position, in the case of civil war ; and the Queen declared, truly enough, that if so much were to be conceded, M. de Longueville would need nothing but the title to be Duke of Normandy. Still, the fact that the Minister's word had been given was undeniable, however little intention there may have been of fulfilling it. Condé now found himself urged by his whole family to take the matter in hand, and to ask Pont-de-l'Arche for his brother-in-law in return for his own consent to the Mancini marriage. He was also to claim the sum of four hundred thousand 'livres', which had been promised with the town. Condé's resentment was not hard to work upon ; he grasped at the suggestion, and promised that Longueville should be satisfied. The frondeurs waited in joyful anticipation, convinced that a crisis was imminent. Nor were they disappointed. The betrothal ceremony was fixed for September 19th. On the evening of the 10th, the Cardinal, meeting M. le Prince at the Queen's Council, asked if he would honour the bride and bridegroom by signing the marriage contract as a witness. Condé excused himself on the plea that he was not related to either party ; and, at the same time, took the opportunity to proffer his claim for Pont-de-l'Arche, on Longueville's behalf. Mazarin's answer was to refuse, publicly, and with more assurance than he often displayed. Condé looked at him in unutterable scorn and anger. Was this coward, this miserable foreigner, to pose as a hero and defy him ? His next act scandalised the Court, almost as an earlier scene had scandalised the Parliament ; he snapped his fingers in the Cardinal's face, saying derisively, 'Adieu, Mars !'—then turned and left the Palace, with no other farewell.

Retz declares that before half an hour had passed the details of the scene were known throughout the whole town. He himself lost no time in acting on the knowledge. Next day saw him, with Beaufort, hastening to offer their joint services to M. le Prince. They found him at the Hôtel de Longueville, where the Duchess and all her circle had received him with triumph and applause. Retz's offer was, at first,

cordially received ; while every pressure was brought to bear on the Prince to let the breach with Mazarin and the Court be final, and to declare openly for the Fronde. These persuasions were still needed ; for both parties knew that the Cardinal might think well to overlook any affront, sooner than lose such an adherent. Then followed a time of bewildering changes and negotiations. Condé, torn by many ambitions and by the conflicting instincts which attached him to his own family and to the Court, suffered tortures of indecision. Neither dissipation nor intellectual interests, to both of which he had recourse, could distract his thoughts ; and the more the uncertainty preyed on his mind and nerves, the more unreasoning and inconsequent his actions became. At one point, Retz, Beaufort, and Noirmoutiers were invited to a secret conference at the Hôtel de Condé at four in the morning, only to hear from the Prince that not all Mazarin's misdeeds could justify him, Condé, in making war against the Crown ; the career of the rebel Duc de Guise was often in his mind, and he maintained that " the conduct of ' le Balafre ' would not beseem a Prince of his race ".¹ Two days later, the thought of alliance with the Cardinal had again become intolerable ; and Le Tellier, who had once more been acting as ambassador, was charged with a message to him " that the Prince would no longer be his friend, or serve him in any thing ".²

Condé's personal friends and followers were driven almost to distraction by these methods ; which, as they saw clearly, could only end in alienating both Royalists and frondeurs. Rohan and Gramont joined with other Royalist nobles in desperate efforts to reconcile him to the Court ; but Lenet, second to none in his knowledge of the Prince's character, would have been content to see him adhering to either of the two factions, provided that his adherence was firm and consistent. Lenet had received a summons to the Hôtel de Condé as soon as the last declaration of war had been dispatched to Mazarin. On his arrival he found M. le Prince in bed at midday, a circumstance explained by his having spent the past evening with the exiled King of England (Charles II) at St. Cloud. Le Tellier had not long left him, bearing the message of

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*,

² Lenet, *Mémoires*,

defiance. Lenet, at first, frankly deprecated the quarrel with the Cardinal; but after some conversation he changed his tone, perceiving that Condé was by this time too deeply engaged with the frondeurs to draw back without loss of credit. He had pledged his word to their leaders in private, besides railing against Mazarin in public. Still Rohan and his allies did not despair; all that day and the next the courtyard of the Hôtel was thronged with messengers and negotiators for peace. Meanwhile the frondeurs flocked in ever-increasing numbers to the Prince, as to their leader; already the pamphleteers were bringing their 'Mazarinades' to him, in the certainty of patronage. The whole Court seemed to be wavering in its allegiance; even Monsieur displayed an ostentatious friendship for his cousin, and they found congenial occupation together in devising satires on the Cardinal. But where Monsieur was concerned, the Abbé de la Rivière had also to be reckoned with. La Rivière had a difficult part to play; for the Cardinal's hat was not yet assured to him, and was never likely to be his, without help from Mazarin, as well as from M. le Prince. Therefore it was for his interests to maintain some kind of friendly relations between the two; and all his influence was used to convert Monsieur into an intermediary. He it was who must persuade Mazarin to give way over Pont-de-l'Arche; and at the same time induce Condé to accept such advances with common politeness. Monsieur's representations, alone, might not have had much weight; but Mazarin had begun to meditate a change of tactics, and allowed himself to be convinced. Either his courage failed him at the sight of M. le Prince and his train of nobles; or, as is not improbable, he saw that his revenge lay further ahead. His aim was to isolate Condé; and if, by winning him back at this juncture, he could sow dissension between him and the Fronde, then no one fortress was too high a price to pay. Madame de Longueville was still rejoicing in her triumph, when the startling intelligence was brought that the Cardinal had yielded; Pont-de-l'Arche had been granted, and M. le Prince was at peace with the Court.

That Mazarin had so far yielded, was true enough; but the peace-making was carried out in scenes of comedy, if not of farce. Lenet, with his late interview still in his mind, could scarcely believe his senses, when,

crossing the Pont-Neuf, he met the Prince, in Gaston's state coach; and was told by La Moussaye—who followed in another carriage and spoke to him from the window—that Monsieur had arranged terms of peace, and that they were even now on their way to the Palais-Royal to proclaim the agreement. A formal reconciliation took place, as afterwards transpired, in the Queen's presence; but with some coldness and condescension on the Prince's side. The sum of money promised with the fortress was reduced by one-half; and he observed that "the favour might have been granted with a better grace". Lenet, after parting from La Moussaye, went directly to inform the Princess Dowager, whom he found with Madame de Longueville at the Hôtel de Condé. Here, fresh rumours reached them; not only were terms of peace agreed upon, but to make their friendship known, the Cardinal was to be entertained at supper by M. le Prince that same evening. Late in the afternoon, Condé himself appeared, to confirm the report. His position might have been embarrassing, for he could not but be conscious of having broken faith with the Fronde; but he had a brotherly love of teasing Madame de Longueville, and no great fear of her displeasure. "Well, ma sœur", he said, with an air described as 'riant et railleur', "have you heard that Mazarin and I are hand and glove together?" But to Madame de Longueville this was no laughing matter. "If it is so", she answered, "I pray that you may not lose all your friends as well as your reputation. La Rivière and Monsieur will not win them back for you; and still less the Queen and the Cardinal". Then after a pause she added: "Is it true that he will be at supper with you to-night?" "That is rather amusing" ("assez plaisant"), answered the Prince; "Monsieur asked me for a supper, and now he says that he will bring Mazarin with him, and musicians, to pass the evening". The Duchess was not satisfied by this explanation, but Condé protested that he could not help himself: "And", he continued, turning to Lenet, "if you will come and join us, you will see how I mean to treat the Cardinal; and that only the consideration I owe to Monsieur has forced me to receive him in my house".¹

Both socially and politically, the supper was as

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

lamentable a failure as might have been expected. Condé's unfitness for the post of a party leader had never been more glaringly apparent. Not all the gravity of the situation could subdue him into self-control. At the sight of Mazarin, hatred and contempt flamed up unchecked; and he set himself deliberately to take all possible advantage of the Cardinal's weakness. Gaston, either from malice or carelessness, did not arrive till nearly an hour after the time appointed; thus leaving Mazarin and the Prince alone together. Condé made the most of his opportunity, and used his gifts of sarcasm and invective to such purpose that Monsieur, arriving with his suite, found the Cardinal "wearing the face of a man who has been tortured".¹ Lenet, who joined the guests after supper, found a melancholy gathering: "Monsieur", he says, "had abandoned his usual gay and lively humour; observing, after several vain efforts, that it was useless to stimulate conversation between the Prince and the Cardinal". Condé was "very grave, contrary to his wont; and never spoke except to utter some taunt against the Cardinal".² Convention demanded that Monsieur should be the first to leave; but Mazarin was reduced to a state of such abject fear and misery, that he defied social rules; and, at the first mention of withdrawal, fled as if for his life. His attendants reported afterwards that he had been in real terror of assassination.

Next day, the frondeurs were again jubilant, and more prudent spirits, in despair. Navailles, captain of the Cardinal's Guard, sought out Lenet, and asked if the Prince could be made to hear reason. Lenet admitted that he now saw no prospect of peace unless the Cardinal's submission were complete. Condé had increased his pretensions, and Pont-de-l'Arche no longer satisfied him; the Mancini marriage—which Lenet speaks of as the real obstacle to reconciliation—must be broken off. As though to prove the truth of these words, M. le Prince caused great agitation at Court two nights later, by giving another supper-party, to which he invited all the leaders of the Fronde. Retz, Beaufort, Noirmoutiers, and La Mothe-Houdancourt were among the guests; besides Rohan and Turenne, who came as personal friends of the

¹ Goulas, *Mémoires*.

² Lenet, *Mémoires*.

Prince; and the company, on this occasion, was as festive as could have been wished. The Queen was both alarmed and offended; but Condé, being expostulated with, only answered that, as long as the Cardinal made friends of the House of Vendôme, he, for his part, should retaliate by propitiating the Fronde. Mazarin's scheme of vengeance was not yet matured; once more he was forced into yielding, to gain time. The last touch to his present humiliation was put by Vendôme himself, who, seeing the Cardinal apparently at Condé's mercy, began to doubt the merits of the alliance. The arrangements for the marriage were abruptly cancelled. Laure Mancini, a promised bride of fifteen, was sent, with her sisters, into temporary banishment at the Convent of Val de Grâce; while her uncle pledged his word, in writing, "to arrange no marriage for his nephew,¹ or for any of his nieces, without having first consulted M. le Prince". These words form part of the conditions formally subscribed by Mazarin, and approved, perforce, by the Queen. The same document sets forth his promise that "no appointment shall be made to any Governorship, or to any office of the Crown or of the King's household, or to any embassy or military command, and that no person shall be dismissed from the Court, and no important affair of State shall be concluded, without the preliminary advice of M. le Prince"; further, "to maintain a perfect understanding with the Prince, and to be his friend, and to serve him, before all and against all".² In return, Condé undertakes "to gave his advice in all sincerity, and to serve Her Majesty with all the diligence in his power"; and to give the Cardinal his friendship and services, both in private interests and in those of the State. This amazing contract was signed by both parties on October 2nd. Condé had yet to learn that his enemy was never more dangerous than when he was frightened. Mazarin, outwardly humbled, was inwardly reassured by the certainty that the Prince might now safely be left to his own devices. The policy of non-interference, which had succeeded so admirably in estranging him from the Parliament, would be no less effective if applied to his dealings with the nobles. Condé, elated by success, 'urged'—as La Rochefou-

¹ Paul Mancini; killed in the Faubourg St. Antoine, 1652.

² A.C., October, 1649.

could say—‘by his evil destiny’, and possessed by a demon of arrogance and unrest, needed little help in his own undoing.

From the seething tide of Court politics and intrigues three incidents stand out to justify Mazarin’s conviction. All three occurred between the date of signing the contract and the end of the year. The first was the episode of Jarzé’s dismissal, which offended the Queen; the second, the ‘*guerre des tabourets*’, which offended the nobles; the third, the marriage of the young Duc de Richelieu,¹ which offended both.

Jarzé,—or, to give him his full title, René du Plessis de la Roche Picmer, Marquis de Jarzé,—was a good-looking, feather-brained young man, known, even among his fellow *petits-mâîtres*, as inordinately conceited and quarrelsome. He was commended to the Prince by reckless liveliness and physical courage, and had won special praise for his services at Fribourg. More lately, during Condé’s absence in Burgundy, he had been one of the foremost in a brawl at the Jardin Renard, a favourite resort and restaurant of the day. Beaufort, with a band of *frondeurs*, encountered Boutteville, Candale, Jarzé, and other Royalists—or ‘*Mazarins*’, as their enemies called them; high words passed, Beaufort overturned a supper-table, and two of the guests were ‘*coiffés d’un potage*’.² But the *petits-mâîtres*, for the most part, had no politics save those of the Prince, their leader; and the first breach with Mazarin was no sooner accomplished than Jarzé offered his services as informer. He undertook to frequent the Palais-Royal on all possible occasions, posing as a fervent Royalist, and to report all he could hear to the Prince. He even hinted, with the most assured impudence, that he was not without personal ascendancy over the Queen herself, and that the Cardinal’s influence might one day be superseded. Condé had no scruples; spies, of one kind or another, were looked on as a necessity of existence. He was perfectly willing that Jarzé should serve him by attempting to make love to the Queen; and only expressed in private his opinion that such a ‘*mad-cap fellow*’ was not likely to be chosen by anyone as a confidant in affairs of State. The Court observed with amusement, and with some indignation, the efforts of the aspiring ‘*galant de la Reine*’;

¹ Great-nephew of the Cardinal; see Chapter IX.

² Retz, *Mémoires*.

than whom Malvolio himself was not more fatuously mistaken ! Contemporary writings describe him, 'peigné, poudré, et vêtu à l'avantage', displaying an ostentatious devotion, day after day. The Queen, at first, was not disposed to deal seriously with the extravagant conduct of a man nearly twenty years younger than herself ; but soon his persistence became intolerable ; and, acting on Mazarin's advice, she rebuked him so sharply and publicly that even his assurance gave way, and he was forced to retreat in confusion. How far the Prince had positively encouraged Jarzé's presumption, does not appear ; but there was no doubt as to his course of action after this crisis. Jarzé was under his protection ; and that one of his followers should be openly disgraced and dismissed from the Court, for whatever reason, was—so he was pleased to consider—an insult to himself. If the Queen found cause for displeasure, she should have warned him, M. le Prince ; and he, if he saw fit, would have instructed Jarzé to withdraw privately. Finally, he insisted, in the most commanding terms, on her allowing the offender to return to Court, as though he were the most guiltless of men. It was small wonder if the Queen declared to her ladies that the audacity of M. le Prince was beyond all bearing ; or if, from that moment, she asked nothing better than to be able to advance any scheme for his punishment.

The 'guerre des tabourets', which began at about the same time as Jarzé's attentions to the Queen, and lasted far longer, was a tedious and intricate dispute on the never-failing subject of precedence. Briefly, certain members of the Albret and La Rochefoucauld families suddenly bethought themselves of asserting their descent from Princes, and demanding the attendant privileges ; among them the right to a seat, or 'tabouret' in the Queen's presence. Urged by La Rochefoucauld, Madame de Longueville persuaded Condé to show his influence, and to ask that these claims might be recognised. Mazarin, no doubt foreseeing the result, encouraged the Queen to give her consent. Then followed tumult. The Dukes and Marshals of France rose in wrath ; each one persuaded that his ancestry would be found to justify a like claim. Either the privileges must be extended to each and all of them, or the new grant of 'tabourets' must be revoked. Meetings of the nobles were convened, in haste and indignation ; private

quarrels were forgotten in this common grievance. The discussion was prolonged for weeks ; and, before its end, Condé found himself practically unsupported. Monsieur, who had upheld him at first, took alarm at the storm that had been raised, and went over to the nobles. The grant was withdrawn, in spite of the Prince's efforts ; he had failed to satisfy his friends, and had made countless enemies among the nobles, who still resented the indignity he had wished to put upon them.

Last of this deplorable series came the marriage of the Duc de Richelieu to Madame de Pons. Condé was never more arbitrary than in his dealings with matrimonial affairs ; witness the long list of marriages made or marred by him. The young Duke, heir to immense estates, was still a minor, and was kept under strict supervision by his aunt and guardian, the Duchesse d'Aiguillon. Madame de Pons was none other than Anne du Vigean, the elder sister of Marthe, and had been one of the six 'angels' of Chantilly who congratulated 'M. le Duc' on his success at Thionville. She was now a widow, and almost dependent on her friends for support ; her husband, a cadet of the House of Albret, had left her little but his name. Madame d'Aiguillon had always considered the Du Vigean family as under her special protection ; Richelieu was twenty ; Madame de Pons was over thirty, and her reputation was admitted to be excellent. All these facts justified the Duchess in encouraging a friendship which she imagined might be an education for her nephew in social matters. Later, she intended that a suitable marriage should be arranged for him ; Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was looked on as a possible bride ; or, if Mazarin should continue in power, one of the Mancini sisters. But all such schemes were discomfited by the counter-designs of Madame de Pons ; who, though she had not Marthe's beauty of face, or of mind, contrived to please many people ; her enemies said, by flattery. Richelieu fell in love with her ; and she, knowing that their marriage would never be countenanced by Madame d'Aiguillon, said no word to her of his attachment, but turned to her friends of the House of Condé for help. Madame de Longueville answered readily to the appeal ; but it was M. le Prince who took the chief responsibility upon himself. He had at least one practical reason for approving the match ;

Richelieu, as soon as he was of age, would be Governor of Havre—another stronghold of Normandy ; and both town and Governor might henceforth be assured to the House of Condé. Lenet confidently affirms that the Prince was moved by sentiment as well ; and that the memory of his love for Marthe du Vigean led him to take up her sister's cause.¹ Nothing was known, or even suspected, at Court, till after the wedding had actually taken place. It then appeared that M. le Prince had accompanied the fugitive couple as far as Trie, where the marriage was celebrated, by night and in secret ; and that he had assisted at the ceremony, playing the part of a parent to both bride and bridegroom, and signing his name as a witness to the contract. The dismay of Madame d'Aiguillon, of the whole family of Richelieu, and of many other families who had hoped for some alliance with the Duke, may be imagined. The Queen shared their indignation ; partly as a friend of the Duchess, and partly on account of the flagrant breach of etiquette involved in the marriage of a Peer of France without the Royal permission. She was not likely to be appeased when Condé, having dispatched Richelieu and his bride on their journey to Havre, reappeared at Court, telling stories of the elopement and its adventures with unconcealed amusement ; and when, to her warning that the marriage might be annulled, on the plea that the Duke was a minor, he answered defiantly, that marriages contracted in his presence, and with his consent, were not made to be annulled.

Mazarin had not awaited this last stroke to begin drawing his toils closer round M. le Prince. The object in view was nothing less than the arrest and imprisonment of the Prince himself, and of his chief adherents ; an arbitrary arrest, such as the Edict of St. Germain had sought to guard against, but which might still serve as a last weapon in the hands of the Sovereign. The design was first whispered ; then spoken of as a possibility ; and finally urged as a necessity, if the Royal authority was to be preserved. The Prince's own actions had given all the assistance that could have been hoped for ; but there remained one or two points on

¹ " Tant il y a qu'il avoit conserve, et conserve encore, je ne sais quelle mémoire pleine de respect et d'estime pour cette bonne religieuse, qu'il ne voit pourtant point ".

which Mazarin felt that assurance must be doubly sure before he could venture on extreme measures. He must place a definite and insurmountable barrier between the Prince and the frondeurs ; and he must win Monsieur's official consent, in spite of La Rivière, who was held fast to Condé by the hope of the Cardinalate.

Of the incidents by which a breach with the frondeurs was brought about, it is practically impossible to write with any certainty in detail. The belief most generally accepted is that Mazarin used for his own purpose an elaborate hoax, played by certain of the lesser bourgeois, or 'rentiers', of Paris on their fellow-citizens. These rentiers were anxious to precipitate the meeting of Parliament, and so to gain further opportunity of claiming redress for their grievances. To this end they adopted the strange expedient of simulating an attempt at assassination upon one Guy Joly, a magistrate, and an acknowledged upholder of the people's rights. The citizens, it was believed, would readily suppose that the Court party had instigated the attempt ; and, in any case, the Parliament must assemble to inquire into such a crime. Joly, in his memoirs, makes no secret of the imposture, and naïvely describes all the preparations made beforehand. The design was duly carried out ; Joly's carriage was fired upon—and discreetly missed—in broad daylight. That same evening a letter was sent to Condé by Servien, now a Secretary of State, and much in Mazarin's confidence. By this same letter the Prince was warned that the frondeurs had set on foot a plot against his life ; that the shots fired at Joly had been intended for him, and that a band of armed men were even now in hiding on the Pont-Neuf, to attack him as he drove past. Condé, after some persuasion, in which the Cardinal eagerly joined, sent his carriage, empty, to the place indicated ; where, as had been foretold, it was greeted by musket-shots, two of which lodged in the wood-work. The proof of murderous intention needed no further support ; before morning the whole city had heard that Beaufort and the Coadjutor were accused of planning the death of M. le Prince.

No serious evidence of such a conspiracy has ever been brought to light ; and, although Mazarin's exact share in the proceedings has never been traced, the inference seems clear that he and Servien had followed

up the rentiers' imposture on the public with one of their own devising, on the Prince. Condé, whose mental balance had been much shaken by his late uncertainties, fell headlong into the trap. His view of an attempt on his life was entirely characteristic, he regarded it far more as an insult than as a danger ; and though he set the whole machinery of the law in motion against the supposed offenders, he took no special measures for his own safety. But while all Paris was enjoying the unwonted spectacle of a First Prince of the Blood appealing for vengeance against his would-be murderers, Mazarin had entered upon definite negotiations with the leaders of the Fronde. His great design against the Prince—now the common enemy of both parties—had been imparted to them, and had received their full acquiescence.

Condé's arrest might be an act of justice, in the sight of the Queen and her Minister, but they, and all others concerned in the preparations, seem to have felt themselves to be conspirators. Suspense grew breathless as, one by one, the necessary actors were admitted to the secret. Before the day of the crisis, seventeen persons, in all, had been informed. Madame d'Aiguillon was of the number, ready and willing to give encouragement if the Queen's heart should fail her. Madame de Chevreuse, already 'grande frondeuse', was easily enrolled by Retz, and made many promises to the Cardinal on behalf of the whole party. Noirmoutiers was bribed by the promise of a 'Duke's patent'. Beaufort was excluded, as hopelessly indiscreet. Nothing now remained but to win over Monsieur, whose consent, as 'Lieutenant of the Kingdom', was indispensable ; and, at the same time, to prevent his confiding in La Rivière, who would probably warn the Prince. The task was wisely entrusted to Madame de Chevreuse ; who discharged it with a skill born of twenty years' ceaseless intriguing. In a few days she had convinced Monsieur that La Rivière had interfered unwarrantably in one of his many love-affairs ; that he had secretly transferred his political allegiance to M. le Prince ; and that nothing but Condé's imprisonment could restore the ascendancy due to a 'son of France'. Monsieur had, not long since, given Condé his promise, before witnesses, that he would warn him of any such design against him that came to his knowledge ; but

he had never yet allowed himself to be bound by his word, and his jealousy was not often appealed to in vain. His official sanction was given forthwith, and a warrant was signed for the arrest of the three Princes; Condé, Longueville, and Conti. No love was lost either between brothers or brothers-in-law; yet so strong was family feeling for the head of the House, that neither Conti nor Longueville could safely be left at liberty. The arrest of Madame de Longueville was ordered for the same day; and also that of the four persons whom she was thought to influence most dangerously: Turenne, La Rochefoucauld, the Duc de Bouillon and his wife. La Moussaye, well known for his devotion to the Prince, was to be another victim.

By January 18th (1650) all was in readiness; every detail of formal preparation for a great coup d'état had been fulfilled. The chief arrest was to take place that evening at the Palais-Royal, where all three Princes were expected to attend the Queen's Council. Longueville, feeling himself insecure in Paris, had for some time avoided presenting himself at the Council; but he was enticed thither on this occasion by a message that some favour to him was to be discussed. Condé, despite warnings, came habitually to the Palace at all times. That he mistrusted the Cardinal is proved by the renewed promise he exacted from him, signed on January 16th, never to depart from his interests, and to defend them 'envers tous et contre tous'; but, either from pride or from negligence, he altered none of his customs. The position he had helped to make for himself was as unenviable as it could well be; he was enraged against the Fronde, suspicious of the Court, and exasperated by his dealings with the law. His gentlemen-in-waiting reported that for many nights he never slept; but spent hours walking up and down his room, or writing on matters of business. Twice, at the Palace, he was on the verge of learning the truth. The first time was when he questioned Mazarin on the subject of a rumour that had just reached him; it was said that the Coadjutor had been holding secret conferences at the Palais-Royal, and had been seen there, night after night, disguised 'en cavalier'. Any sign of embarrassment on Mazarin's part would have been fatal. But with great presence of mind

he disarmed suspicion, and turned Condé's love of ridicule to good account, by answering that M. le Coadjuteur would indeed be a fine sight in a feathered hat, and with ribbons at his knees to show off his bow legs; and that if he ever visited him, Mazarin, in such guise, he promised His Highness to send him word, that he might come and enjoy the joke. The second, and still narrower, escape, was when on the morning of the 18th Condé came, unexpectedly, into the room where the Cardinal and a secretary were in the act of drawing up instructions for his safe-conduct to Vincennes after the arrest. Mazarin came forward in haste to greet him, while the secretary hid most of the papers; and the Prince, before he left the room, had actually been trapped into signing part of the instructions himself. The Cardinal explained that an escort of cavalry would be needed for certain prisoners connected with the attempt on Joly; would M. le Prince, as 'Grand Maître', send an order to the household troops,—the 'chevau-légers' and 'gendarmes du Roi',—for the purpose? Condé, nothing loth, affixed his 'Louis de Bourbon' to the document before him, and departed. He dined that day with the Princess Dowager, whom he found much concerned over the rumours which she too had heard. She warned both her sons that the Palace was no safe place for them; but Condé maintained that he knew better; that it was only La Rivière who was playing him false, and who spread these reports of evil designs at Court in order to incline Monsieur to the Fronde.

As the hours passed and the time of the Council drew near, the Queen, for all her naturally calm temperament, found herself in a state of nervousness beyond control. Condé had indeed given her much just cause for offence; but now, when the warrant was signed, and Guitaut, her Captain of the Guard, waited only for her word to pronounce the arrest, she remembered all that France and the King had owed to M. le Prince in the past seven years. Her intention never faltered, but she could not meet the eyes of the Court; instead, she kept to her own rooms and pleaded a headache. The Princess Dowager came to visit her, and made anxious inquiries for her health; thereby heightening the distress of the Queen, who

held her in real affection, and could think of nothing but the terrible blow about to be inflicted on her. Custom required that M. le Prince should also be admitted to audience on his arrival at the Palace; he was ushered in during his mother's visit, and stayed for a short time, talking on indifferent matters. This was the last time that the Princess ever saw her son.¹ Soon after he had left them, the Queen dismissed her other visitors, saying that she must go to the Council; then, summoning her courage, she sent the word to Guitaut. When that was done, she took the King with her into her oratory, explained to him what was happening, and told him to kneel down by her side and pray; and thus they waited, till the order was fulfilled.

Condé, after leaving the Queen's private rooms, returned to join the Princes and Ministers, who were assembling for the Council. Mazarin's courage, like the Queen's, had failed at the last; as he was passing from his own apartments to the long gallery where the Council was held, he called to La Rivière: "Come back with me to my room; I have something important to say to you". La Rivière was perplexed; but he had, a moment earlier, been furiously attacked by M. le Prince, for real or supposed dealings with the Fronde; and was probably glad enough to escape. Monsieur had also thought it well to be absent from the Council, and excused himself, as usual, on the score of illness. The Prince was in the centre of the gallery, talking eagerly to one of the Ministers, when the doors opened, and, instead of the Queen, who was momentarily expected, the Captain of the Guard entered alone. Condé knew, and liked, 'le vieux Guitaut', whose young kinsman, 'le petit Guitaut' was an officer of his own; and, expecting a request for some favour, he went forward and asked him what he wanted. Guitaut's task was a hard one, but he faced it unflinchingly; he answered, in a low voice: "My orders are to arrest you, Monseigneur,—you, and M. le Prince de Conti, and M. de Longueville". "To arrest me!" repeated the Prince, and paused, half incredulous; then added, after an instant's thought: "Go, in God's name, to the Queen, and ask her to let me speak with her!" Guitaut went, though assuring him, at the

¹ The Princess Dowager died on December 2, 1650.

same time, that it was useless ; he could leave his prisoners without fear, for the Palace was closely guarded. Condé turned to the rest of the company, who had not overheard ; but they saw by his face that he was moved : " Gentlemen ", he said, " the Queen has ordered my arrest. And yours ", to Conti ; " and yours, M. de Longueville ". " I must confess ", he added, " that I am taken by surprise ; for I have always served the King, and I thought myself assured of the Cardinal's friendship ". Le Tellier made some suggestion as to a practical joke. " If you think it is so ", Condé answered, " pray go to the Queen and tell her of it ; but for my part, I believe I am a prisoner ". He also sent a message to Mazarin, asking to see him. Guitaut's errand took some minutes ; time enough for the Prince to realise his position. He knew only too well that years, even a lifetime, of imprisonment might follow such an arrest. But the pride and courage of his race rose up to meet adversity ; and he received the message of the Queen's refusal with perfect composure : " Well, I obey. Where are you going to take us ? To a warm place, I hope ", for the weather that night was very cold. Guitaut answered that they were ordered to Vincennes : " Let us go, then ", said the Prince. As he spoke, he turned towards the door at the far end of the gallery ; and Guitaut, thinking he was planning escape, warned him that it was watched from outside. Then, ' with a serene and tranquil countenance ', M. le Prince took leave of the company, asking them not to forget him, but to assure others that he had been a good servant of the King. Longueville and Conti remained passive, neither uttering a word. Comminges, Guitaut's nephew, and his lieutenant, entered with a guard, and the prisoners passed through the gallery to a small private door, whence a narrow staircase led down into the garden ; a way known only to few. Condé, walking first of the three Princes, looked down the winding stair into the darkness, and an inevitable suspicion crossed his mind ; he turned to the officer beside him : " Comminges ", he said, " you are a man of honour and a gentleman. What have I to fear ? " And, in a few seconds, even while they waited, he reminded him of the friendship he had always felt towards him, and towards his kinsmen, and how it had benefited them. Comminges

deserved all confidence ; he would never have been a party to the Prince's assassination : " On my honour, Monseigneur ", he assured him, " I have no orders but to take you to Vincennes ". This was enough for Condé, who passed on first down the stair, and to the outer door of the gardens, where a carriage was waiting. The cavalry escort, ordered by himself, and captained by the Comte de Miossens,¹ was ready to join them. The Prince looked round on the gendarmes, whom Châtillon had led, and said to them : " This is not the battle of Lens ! " There was no answer ; those who had served him then, were silent now ; possibly, in the haste and darkness, the men scarcely realised the identity of the prisoner who spoke. Strictly guarded, the carriage drove through Paris by unknown, circuitous ways, avoiding crowded streets, and passing out by the Porte Richelieu, safe and unhindered.

Beyond the gates, the horses were urged over rough roads with more haste than caution till, in one rut deeper than the rest, the carriage was half overturned and brought to a standstill. The prisoners alighted ; and Miossens' first act was to lay hands on the Prince ; Condé's skill in all active exercises was renowned at Court, and his escort knew that there were few men who could run him down across country, even in daylight. Miossens afterwards related that M. le Prince had already made a movement to escape ; and that, finding himself held, he said : " I am not going to run ; but, Miossens, see what you can do for me ! "—to which the Count had answered by protestations of his duty to the King. But Madame de Motteville, to whom he told the story, adds that, on matters which concerned himself, Miossens' word was not an infallible authority. At last the unwieldy carriage was set upright again, and the journey was continued. Comminges admonished the driver, telling him to make haste, and the Prince laughed : " Never fear, Comminges ", he said ; " no one is coming after us. I took no precautions ". On their way he sounded both Guitaut and Comminges as to the immediate reasons for the Queen's act. Comminges answered—as became one who was a scholar and courtier, as well as a soldier—" that he believed the only crime of M. le Prince against the Crown, or rather against the Cardinal, was that of Germanicus against

¹ César-Phébus d'Albret, afterwards Marshal of France.

the Emperor Tiberius ; he was too great, and deserving of too much honour". The prisoners reached Vincennes at about ten o'clock ; an arrival even more cheerless than had been expected. For greater secrecy, no preparations had been made to receive them ; there were neither beds nor food. After some delay, a meal of bread and eggs was produced, but they were told that there was no wine. "There must be wine", Condé persisted, "since Rantzau¹ is here" ; and so it proved. The Marshal had been disgraced, and imprisoned, on an accusation of secret dealings with the Spaniards ; he was lodged in another part of the fortress, and there, as the Prince had foretold, a store of wine was discovered. When supper was finished, there were still no beds, and the Princes were obliged to sit up most of the night. Conti and Longueville were in a state of the deepest dejection ; Condé laughed at them, and made them play cards with him ; he also talked much with Comminges, and had a long argument with him on the subject of astrology ! Comminges was fascinated, as others had been, by his prisoner's conversational gifts ; for it was well known that M. le Prince could make himself as charming as he often was the reverse. The Lieutenant's duty at Vincennes continued for a week, before permanent officers were appointed ; and on his return to Court he declared freely that he had never passed his time in such good company as that of the Prince. He would have asked nothing better, he said, than to guard him at Vincennes for the whole time of his captivity ; if it were not that he felt certain he could never have treated such a prisoner with the strictness that would be required. It was observed that, when they parted, there were tears in the eyes of both ; yet neither, as those who knew them could testify, "had ever been accused of too much sensibility".²

Comminges was not the only one of the nobles to whom Condé's arrest brought an unexpected sense of indignity ; of resentment that a foreign minister should have compassed the imprisonment of a 'Premier Prince' whose achievements had been a glory to France. But to the great majority in all classes, the moment was one of relief and triumph ; and Mazarin's supremacy seemed as complete as Condé's had been six months earlier. The citizens lit bonfires in the streets when they

¹ See Chapter X.

² Motteville, *Mémoires*.

heard that the demon Prince, who had starved them and preyed upon them in the late siege, was safe at Vincennes. ' Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose ! ' Such fires were not lighted again till a year had passed ; by which time they blazed more brightly than ever, to celebrate his release.

CHAPTER XIV

THE PRINCES IN CAPTIVITY

1650-51

OF the seventeen persons who had planned the Princes' arrest, not one was a novice in the art of concealment. It was inevitable that some rumour should be spread abroad ; but though suspicion was rife, it had taken no definite form ; and on those most nearly concerned, the blow fell like a thunderbolt. The arrests of secondary importance, which should have followed, failed, nevertheless, with few exceptions ; for the reason that no measures could be taken to carry them out, until the success of the first great stroke was absolutely assured. To imprison Madame de Longueville would have been worse than useless, so long as there was any chance of her husband and brothers finding themselves at liberty.

On the night of January 18th the news from the Palace spread like wildfire ; Bouillon, Turenne, and La Moussaye were warned, and fled instantly from Paris, escaping the bearer of the warrant only by a few minutes. Madame de Bouillon, a true heroine among frondeuses, was delayed by the illness of her little daughter, whom she refused to leave ; in consequence, she was arrested at her own house, and both mother and child spent several months in the Bastille. Madame de Longueville escaped a like fate only by accident. The Queen was no sooner informed that the Princes were on the road to Vincennes, than she sent to summon the Duchess, intending to have her arrested the instant she should set foot in the Palace. It chanced, however, that, when the messenger arrived, Madame de Longueville was not at her hotel ; but had gone to spend the evening with the Princess Palatine. The delay saved her ; for while she was with her friend, the news of the Princes' arrest was brought, and the Royal

summons was forestalled. The Duchess fainted on first hearing the tidings ; but it was no time for giving way to distress ; and she had scarcely recovered before she set out for the Hôtel de Condé, to break the news to the Princess Dowager. Brienne, one of the Queen's Ministers, had come thither for the same purpose and was still in the ante-room, hesitating over the task. Madame de Longueville was almost speechless with grief ; she sank down before her mother, exclaiming : " Ah, Madame, mes frères ! " and could say no more. The Princess gave a cry of despair : " My sons, my children ! Are they dead ? What have they done to them ? " Brienne came forward and told her the truth, adding the Queen's commands to herself : that she was to leave Paris, and withdraw to Chantilly, taking with her the young Princess, her daughter-in-law, and the little Duc d'Enghien. They alone, of the House of Condé, were thought harmless and uninfluential enough to be left in comparative freedom. Almost at the same moment the Queen's messenger sent to announce his presence, having followed the Duchess from the Hôtel de Longueville. But by this time she was prepared ; instead of obeying the summons, she escaped by a side door from the Hôtel de Condé, and returned to the Princess Palatine, who conducted her safely to a small house in the Faubourg St. Germain. Here she stayed for some hours in hiding, till she was joined by La Rochefoucauld, with his brother-in-law, the Marquis de Sillery, and a few followers ; and also, very unwillingly, by her less adventurous stepdaughter, Mademoiselle de Longueville. The Princess Palatine put carriages and horses at their disposal ; and before morning, the Duchess and her friends were on the road to Normandy.

The frondeurs lost no time in flocking to pay their homage to the Queen, and to show their goodwill towards Mazarin. Within two hours after the arrest, the Palace was thronged with them ; many swearing, on the swords they wore, to be the loyal and devoted servants of the King, henceforth and for ever. The Queen received their protestations with dignity and with sufficient graciousness, but there was no sign of exultation in her manner ; and when Madame de Montbazon offered fervent congratulations, she answered coldly, that for her own part she was incapable of feeling pleasure at such a time. Monsieur's comment,

when the news reached him, was quoted throughout the town: "It was a good haul" ('un bon coup de filet'), he said; "they have taken a bear, a monkey, and a fox". The bear was Condé, whom Monsieur, in moments of displeasure, affected to look on as a rude, unpolished soldier. All three nicknames were instantly enshrined in popular verse:

"On a vu passer le guichet
Un ours, un renard, et un singe,
Qui furent pris au trébuchet;
On a vu passer le guichet
La troupe que l'on dénichait
Par Guitaut, Miossens et Comminges".

The only dissentient voices heard, beyond the immediate circle of the House of Condé, were those of certain Royalist nobles who felt the Prince's imprisonment to be, in some sort, a national disgrace. Among them was La Meilleraie, to whom Condé, as a boy, had been entrusted at the siege of Arras; and who had since quarrelled with, and been crossed by, his former charge, on more than one occasion. Yet his first impulse, now, was to write to Mazarin of his "great grief on hearing of the detention of M. le Prince in a place from which his rare gifts and great reputation ought speedily to deliver him". "It is certain", La Meilleraie assures the Cardinal, "that all those who, like myself, have made it their profession to serve the Prince, will be deeply affected".¹

The first task of Condé's adherents was to discover how many of the nobles were willing to carry this feeling of resentment into practical effect. It was soon evident that many of those who had most personal regard for M. le Prince shrank, none the less, from open war against the Crown. La Meilleraie, having uttered his protest, prepared to fulfil his duties as a Marshal and 'grand maître de l'artillerie' in case of rebellion. Gramont had wept publicly, on hearing of the arrest; but even while dwelling on his grief, he assured the Queen that his first duty would always be to her, and to the King. Of the great feudal lords who ruled almost as sovereigns over vast estates, two only—Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld—had openly declared themselves rebels; but Bouillon's adherence was invaluable to the Princes, for it carried with it that of

¹ * *Archives Étrangères*, Paris.

Turenne. Next came the troop of Condé's own officers : La Moussaye, Boutteville, Tavannes, Chavagnac, and others, whose indignation was so great as almost to hinder their efficiency. Lenet complains of finding Tavannes, with five or six companions, railing against the name of Mazarin, " like dogs baying the moon ", when they might have been more usefully employed. Boutteville, on the night of the arrest, had made desperate attempts to raise an armed insurrection on the Prince's behalf ; and failing, had withdrawn to Stenay, a fortress on the northern frontier, where Turenne had made his headquarters. La Moussaye was Governor of the town, and its position was at once established as the chief stronghold of a new force ; a force of which Turenne was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and which took to itself the somewhat equivocal title of ' L'armée du Roi, pour la délivrance des Princes '. Here was the rendezvous for officers of all ranks, who came in from different parts of the country, sometimes alone, sometimes with a small following of troops. Bouillon and Rochefoucauld were occupied in levying forces, each on his own estates. The feudal spirit ensured them some success ; but elsewhere, in towns and provinces alike, seigneurs and burghers, for the most part, held firm to the King. Mazarin, at the very instant of the arrest, had taken his measures of precaution throughout the country with unerring skill ; and the organisers of the rebel army found themselves baffled at every turn. Marsin, who was commanding the forces in Catalonia, and who, at a word, would have placed his whole army at the Prince's disposal, was summarily arrested before he could even declare his intention. The public posts held by the three prisoners were promptly refilled. Harcourt was appointed Governor of Normandy ; Vendôme, of Burgundy. Both provinces submitted to the new rule with scarcely a murmur ; and, by a happy inspiration of the Cardinal's, their loyalty was sealed in each case by a visit from the King in person. Madame de Longueville, arriving at Rouen in the course of her flight, found the gates of the city closed to her. At Havre she fared no better, in spite of the Duc de Richelieu's indebtedness to M. le Prince ; Madame d'Aiguillon had sent commands which outweighed her nephew's influence. The fugitive princess,

driven from one port to another, passed through many dangers by sea and land, and was forced, at last, to escape to Holland on board an English ship. Thence she crossed the frontier and travelled to Stenay, where she gave the full benefit of her counsels to Turenne.

To Lenet, and the civilian followers of the Prince, fell the work of establishing secret communications, like a network, throughout the land ; between Stenay and other possible centres of disaffection ; between the family headquarters at Chantilly and the officers of the ' army of release ' ; above all, between the prisoners and their friends. The credit of this last achievement belongs chiefly to Montreuil,¹ Conti's secretary, whose ingenuity defeated even the rigorous watchfulness of the *Sieur de Bar*, Comminges' successor in the guardianship of the Princes. Some of the letters were introduced by means of hollowed crown-pieces, opening with a spring. These, with a small paper tightly folded inside, were confided to one of Bar's servants, whose interest had been gained, and who mixed them with the coins used by the Princes when they played cards ; the rule of the Castle forbade any money to pass through the prisoners' hands, but a certain number of coins were dealt out to them, like counters, for use in their game. Condé's well-known habit of reading in bed was likewise turned to account ; for books, and a light, had been allowed him without question. The warders who were instructed to ' observe the prisoners' countenances ' in the day, and to visit them in their beds during the night, had all suspicion disarmed by the sight of M. le Prince studying folio editions of the classics ; and though such volumes must surely have been unwieldy for night reading, the blank paper of the margins proved invaluable. The Prince carried an Indian ink pencil, fastened to the inside of his shirt ; with this he often contrived to write a few words, in cipher, on the corner of a page, which was easily torn off ; and these scraps of paper were passed out, by various subterfuges, through an accomplice.

The prisoners were forced to look on this precarious intercourse as almost the only consolation of their lot.

¹ " Montreuil had some reputation, in his day, as a writer of light verse. Retz speaks of him, also, as " *un des plus jolis garçons que j'ai jamais connu*".

The Sieur de Bar was an impenetrable guardian; 'homme farouche', in whom no social or intellectual qualities could find response, and who was known, moreover, to cherish a personal dislike for M. le Prince. Guy Joly, though avowedly opposed to the Princes' cause, accuses this stern warder of "imagining that the worse he treated his prisoners, the more favour he would find at Court",¹ and of regulating his treatment of them accordingly. Reports came to the Luxembourg that Condé had shown no outward sign of distress, from the moment of his arrest till he heard the name of his jailer; but that at the thought of being watched, day and night, by the Sieur de Bar, sudden despair seized him, and he wept. Some such reaction was inevitable, to a man of his temperament, after a prolonged nervous strain; but it was not often that he gave his enemies so much gratification. As a rule, his good spirits and his activity of mind and body were in marked contrast to the dejected state of his fellow-prisoners. "The three Princes", says a contemporary, "lived very differently from each other during their captivity. M. de Longueville was gloomy, and never said a word. The Prince of Conti lay in bed, and shed tears without ceasing. M. le Prince sang, and swore; heard Mass every morning, read French and Italian; and played 'au volant'". Condé's friends, who knew his tastes, were allowed to send him presents of books, but all such offerings had to pass through the hands of M. de Bar. Mademoiselle de Scudéry writes to Godeau, Bishop of Vence, that her brother has sent to M. le Prince the fifth volume of *Le Grand Cyrus*, which had just then appeared. Bar acknowledged the volume, saying that he would first read it himself; "but he writes so badly", the authoress observes, "that I very much doubt whether he is able to read". The Prince, by way of a more serious occupation, busied himself also in writing a formal justification of his late actions, which was to be presented to the King. The 'jeu de volant'—a compromise between tennis and the modern battledore and shuttlecock—was not organised in the earliest days of his imprisonment. At first the Princes were allowed no exercise save that of walking on the ramparts; where Condé, never at a loss for

¹ Guy Joly, *Mémoires*.

employment, turned his mind to gardening, as the spring advanced, and cultivated carnations in pots. Longueville, who was lamed by the gout, and Conti, whose health forbade vigorous amusements, were easily satisfied; but M. le Prince demanded, and at last obtained, a freer scope. Bar writes that "his promenoir, though still between four walls, has been extended, and transferred to a different place; he is able to play both at billiards and 'au volant'".¹ Longueville was lodged separately, while, for a time, the two brother Princes shared a room; but Conti was presently removed to where he could enjoy more light and air than on the ground floor of the Castle. The food provided for them was scarce, and not of good quality. Some suggestion had been made that the Princes should spare the public exchequer by paying for their own maintenance; but this, Condé flatly refused to do, declaring that he would far sooner starve. "Let him starve, then!" said the Queen, when the answer was repeated to her; and though she had no serious intention of carrying out the threat, the dispute caused an interval, in which Bar himself had perforce to provide for the prisoners at his own expense. Mazarin rewarded him by the gift of 'an abbey for one of his children'.²

The religious exercises of the prisoners received a good deal of consideration; each was allowed to choose the confessor who was to visit him. Before the feast of Candlemas, Bar writes to Mazarin that "Monseigneur le Prince asks for Père Boucher, a Jesuit; Monseigneur de Conti for Père Talon, of the same order; and M. de Longueville, for Père François, a Franciscan".³ The two latter priests, apparently, could not obey the summons in time, and Condé, alone, was duly shriven before the festival. The next report announces that "M. le Prince has confessed to Père Boucher; the other two refused to confess, except to Père Talon and Père François. M. le Prince joked a great deal, afterwards, on the subject of his confession, and was particularly anxious to know what His Royal

¹ * *Archives Étrangères*, Paris.

² Lettres de Mazarin; September, 1650. The gift of 'an abbey' was a not uncommon form of favour. The child on whom it was bestowed became titular Abbot, or Abbess, and enjoyed the revenues of the office, without its responsibilities.

³ *Archives Étrangères*, Paris.

Highness (Monsieur) said of his having asked for a confessor ".¹ As a further sign of this impenitent state, it was told that when Conti, seized with a sudden access of piety, asked Bar to procure him a copy of Thomas à Kempis' *Imitation of Christ*, M. le Prince struck in : " Pray bring me, at the same time, an Imitation of M. de Beaufort "; the last State prisoner who had escaped from Vincennes.

Condé left no stone unturned to follow Beaufort's example in good earnest ; preferably, perhaps, by fair means, but if not, by any others that came to hand. Bar complains to Mazarin, immediately on taking up his post : " Monseigneur le Prince has forced me to tell him that his ideas of regaining liberty, otherwise than by the King's orders, will do him no good, and that in any extremity that might arise, I should put my honour and duty before all other considerations ".² Whether Condé had made any actual attempt to corrupt Bar, does not appear ; but there is no doubt that, in the case of subordinate officers, and of the sentries who guarded him, he tried and succeeded. Many of them had served under him, at different times ; and there was one, Francœur, a serjeant, who confided to a friend, Jean Hérault de Gourville, La Rochefoucauld's agent, that these men often spoke to each other of " their grief at having to mount guard over M. le Prince, whom they had seen risking his life in the King's service, and who was now imprisoned, at the pleasure of a foreigner ".³ The Prince encouraged this feeling by certain methods which no one knew better than he how to employ. He talked with the sentries on duty at the door of his room and made them laugh ; and on one occasion offered them bribes, by inference, in the very hearing of his jailer. This last was a frankly imprudent measure ; but it exasperated Bar, and was therefore irresistible. Condé had asked that the sum of a hundred pistoles might be left in his hands ; Bar refused, quoting the rule which allowed no money to the prisoners. " Do you suppose ", asked the Prince scornfully, " that I am likely to corrupt these men "—indicating the guard, who were well within hearing—" with a hundred pistoles ? Nevertheless, if I had promised to pay each one of them a hundred thousand francs, the first thing I should

¹ * Le Tellier to Mazarin, *Archives Etrangères*, Paris.

² *Archives Etrangères*, Paris.

³ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

do, were I at liberty, would be to satisfy them all ”.¹ Another story was told, to the effect that Bar had once allowed his son to join the Princes at cards : “ What shall we stake ? ” Condé asked the boy ; “ shall it be a Marshal’s baton ? ” Such speeches would easily account for Bar’s warning, even if no direct advances had been made towards himself.

Gourville, though at this time a very young man, was known as ‘ a skilled walker in devious ways ’ ;¹ he was already in the confidence of La Rochefoucauld, and, in years to come, was to succeed Lenet in that of M. le Prince. Francœur’s admissions were not lost upon him ; he promptly won over the serjeant, and charged him to let it be known secretly to all the guard, that a fortune was assured to any who would help in contriving the Princes’ escape. He applied for money to the Princess Dowager, who was ready to advance the sums for distribution. Soon, a definite plot was under consideration ; the prisoners were to seize their opportunity while Bar was attending Vespers in the chapel. Forty of the guard had been secured as accomplices, and kept the secret ; but a servant of the Princess, in whom she had been forced to confide, betrayed the design to a priest in the confessional. No names of individuals were discovered, but the whole staff of the prison, with the exception of a few officers, was changed ; and restrictions were more sternly practised even than before. Secret communication became increasingly difficult ; and for a time the Princes heard little or nothing of their friends’ movements, save the occasional discouraging items of news which Bar thought fit to impart to them. Three times, in the course of a few weeks, Condé was visited by Servien, who came as the Cardinal’s messenger on visits of inspection. Servien was as anxious as Bar himself to keep information from the Prince ; but he also wished to discover how far any word from Stenay, or other strongholds, had penetrated into the prison. Condé, on his side, was bent on making Servien disclose as many facts as possible, and, at the same time, on hiding his own ignorance. Thus the interviews resolved themselves into a series of verbal fencing-matches. In spite of Servien’s caution, it was from him that Condé learnt of Madame de Longueville’s arrival at Stenay ; and of how she and

¹ Goulas, *Mémoires*.

Turenne were on the point of concluding a treaty with the Archduke Leopold, who was to bring Spanish troops to their assistance. Servien was not without hope that some instinctive feeling of loyalty might prompt Condé to forbid such an extreme measure: "Your Highness should write to those who are in Stenay", he said, "and tell them of their duty to the King". But the Prince turned his enemies' weapons against themselves, and only answered: "A prisoner can give no orders".

When the immediate fear of an escape had subsided, and Servien's journeys to Vincennes were discontinued, a surer source of information offered itself. Conti's health was urged, quite justifiably, as a pretext for visits from two doctors, Guénaud and Dalencé; the first-named, a well-known figure of his day, attended half the Court, and had all the news of Paris at his fingers' ends. It was Dalencé who, one day in the early summer, found M. le Prince tending his carnations on the ramparts, and imparted to him tidings more astonishing than any that the prisoners had yet heard. 'Madame la Princesse la fille'—Claire-Clémence, the neglected wife, whose helplessness and supposed lack of influence had saved her from arrest—was proving herself a heroine! She, with her son, had escaped in disguise from Chantilly, where they had been kept under supervision; she had gathered round her a band of her husband's followers, joined forces with Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld, and by her personal appeals persuaded the citizens of Bordeaux to declare openly against the King. The strangeness, the utter unexpectedness of the situation, was summed up by M. le Prince: "Who would have thought that I should be watering carnations, while my wife made war?"¹

Space fails in which to do justice to the gallant efforts of Claire-Clémence on her husband's behalf. She stands, an artless and pathetic figure, in marked contrast to the women of the Fronde. Her ten years of married life had been passed in obscurity as complete as was possible for anyone of her station. Condé's attitude towards her had never materially altered since the early days of their marriage. He did not positively ill-treat her; but except that he recognised her claim

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

to an establishment, and to the privileges of her rank as his wife, he seemed to ignore the very fact of her existence. Through no fault of her own, she had committed two unpardonable offences against him : in the first place she represented, for all time, the most humiliating coercion his will had ever suffered ; in the second, nature had given her no brilliant qualities, and she bored him. His neglect was flagrant, and inexcusable ; but, even so, it could not account, alone, for the inconspicuous part she had played in both public and private life. With all her merits, it is evident that her personality, as a whole, failed to make any definite impression ; and those who knew her intimately had least expected to see her taking the line of decisive action. Lenet, with others of the Princes' followers, had founded great hopes on the women of the party ; notably on Madame de Longueville, and on the Duchesse de Châtillon, whose influence was now first felt in the House of Condé ; but to Madame la Princesse, no one, apparently, had ever given a thought. The Princess Dowager, in the despondency of grief, and of failing health, was unwilling to take any steps counter to the Royal authority ; she would only consent to humiliate herself before the Coadjutor, and the whole Parliament, imploring their favour and intercession for her sons. Claire-Clémence had been treated as a child, and was told only as much of the designs of the party as others thought well for her to hear ; till the day came when she addressed herself to Lenet, and informed him, privately, that she feared no undertaking which did not separate her from her son, the Duc d'Enghien. With him she would brave any dangers, " never forgetting what was due from her, as the wife of a Prince of the Blood, and more especially of one so renowned as her husband ". Lenet listened with joy and amazement ; he had a very moderate opinion of the Princess's abilities, but he knew well that it would be hard to find a more valuable party asset than the young mother and her son. Her courage and devotion must touch all hearts. The Princess Dowager was persuaded to connive at their escape ; and a few days later (April 10th) Claire-Clémence and the little Duke set forth, with a handful of attendants, on their romantic adventure.

Some weeks passed in journeyings and hardships,

but the Princess was true to her word, and her determination never faltered. She travelled from Chantilly to Montrond, and from Montrond to join the 'army of the Dukes' in the south-west. At the village of Anglar, in Guyenne, Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld, at the head of their troops, received her with acclamations; the whole force was passed in review, and the Duc d'Enghien, 'un vrai petit déterminé', made his first public speech. "I am not afraid of Mazarin", he said, addressing the officers, "now that I see you, with all these brave men; and I know that my dear father's liberty depends on your courage, and on theirs". In answer came the war-cry of the 'Fronde of the Princes', now heard for the first time: "Vive le Roi! les Princes! et point de Mazarin!" But no enthusiasm could give these untrained, hastily-levied recruits strength to stand against the King's troops. The garrisons of Bellegarde, Saumur, and Verteuil—all held by followers of the Prince—surrendered in turn. The 'army of the Dukes' fell back on Bordeaux; the Princess still in their midst, assisting at their councils and facing all the dangers of the march. Bordeaux had been for some time a centre of disaffection, and the citizens had once already taken arms against the Duc d'Épernon, Governor of the province. Claire-Clémence threw herself on their mercy; she appeared before the Parliament of Bordeaux, asking, in dignified and moving terms, a refuge for herself and her son. The leaders of the Parliament hesitated; but their scruples vanished when the Duc d'Enghien, well taught beforehand, put one knee to the ground and appealed to them—"Messieurs, servez-moi de père! Le Cardinal Mazarin m'a ôté le mien!" Bordeaux seemed likely to become the chief stronghold of the Princes' party in the south, as Stenay already was in the north; Madame la Princesse and the little Duke were established within the walls, and negotiations were opened with the Spaniards, whose fleet was looked for in the Gironde. Mazarin, who had hitherto concentrated his chief efforts against Turenne on the northern frontier, now turned his attention to the south. Both in Normandy and in Burgundy, the personal presence of the King had acted like a charm on any subjects inclined to rebellion. Mazarin persuaded the Queen to undertake a journey to Guyenne; she prepared to

advance upon Bordeaux, with the King, protected by an army under La Meilleraie and Palluau.

In the north, Turenne was ready to seize an advantage. He had marched from Stenay, in the early days of June, to join forces with the Archduke at Landrecies. Their united force of 40,000 men took Le Catelet, and laid siege, unsuccessfully, to Guise. Opposed to them, at the head of the King's 'army of Champagne', was the Marshal du Plessis-Praslin,¹ a loyal and most capable commander. His force, though greatly inferior in numbers, for some time kept the enemy in check ; but he was no sooner weakened by the withdrawal of troops for service in Guyenne than Turenne and Boutteville, with an advance guard of six or seven thousand men, made a dash forward ; took Réthel, and defeated a detachment of the King's troops at Fismes (August 18th). Boutteville, all eagerness to march on Vincennes and deliver the Princes with his own hand, pushed on, at the head of a small cavalry force, as far as La Ferté-Milon. But the Archduke, naturally enough, was far less anxious to liberate Condé than to secure new possessions on the frontier ; and Turenne could not prevail on him to advance in support. The alarm, however, had reached Paris ; where, during the King's absence in Guyenne, the Royal authority was represented by Monsieur. Vincennes, if invasion threatened, was no safe place of captivity for M. le Prince ; and much discussion ensued as to the transportation of the prisoners. Condé was the caged lion ; and the point at issue was, which party should hold the keys of the cage, and let him loose on their enemies at pleasure ? So long as his prison was in Paris, or no farther from Paris than Vincennes, the frondeurs felt that this power was theirs ; therefore Retz, and all his faction, maintained that M. le Prince would be nowhere so secure as in the Bastille itself. The Ministers, on the other hand, advised his removal to Havre, where Mazarin's influence was believed to be supreme. Monsieur's hesitations were cut short, and a compromise effected, by a suggestion said to have emanated from Madame de Chevreuse. The fortified castle of Marcoussis, in Monsieur's own domains, near

¹ César de Choiseul, Marquis du Plessis-Praslin, afterwards Duc de Choiseul ; born 1598 ; distinguished in Italian campaigns, 1636-48 ; held important offices at Court ; died 1675.

Limours, was the place appointed ; and on August 29th, the Princes were transferred thither, under a strong guard. In the pressing fear of Turenne's approach, this measure was taken in haste. The Queen, now established, with the Cardinal and all her suite, at Bourg-la-Géronde, while the Royal army laid siege to Bordeaux, was not even consulted beforehand. Mazarin, acting on the spot, might have avoided the decision ; which, as it proved, was both needless and unpopular. Boutteville came no farther ; but the peace between the Court and the frondeurs had been rudely shaken.

The seven months of their captivity had told upon all three prisoners ; especially on Conti, whose state of health began to give rise to anxiety. M. le Prince was said to look thinner even than usual, and to be giving way, at last, to depression. Many rumours were current in Paris at the time ; as, that Conti was at the point of death ;¹ that M. le Prince had sent a message by Bar, promising eternal friendship to the Cardinal on condition of their release ;² or again, that Mazarin had offered the Prince his liberty if he would consent to a marriage between Conti and a Mancini, and that the idea had been rejected with scorn ;³ but of these, the correspondence between Bar and Mazarin affords no proof. The removal to Marcoussis was a further discouragement, emphasising the prisoners' sense of helplessness ; and, as the autumn advanced, the news from Guyenne was not calculated to cheer them. Even Bordeaux had not been proof against the King's all-conquering presence. Mazarin, alarmed by Turenne's progress in the north, and the actual presence of the Spaniards in Champagne, was prepared to grant the most indulgent terms to the rebels, in return for the laying down of arms and the breaking off of all negotiations with foreign powers ; Épernon's withdrawal was promised, and all the rights of the citizens were to be respected. Bouillon and La Rochefoucauld saw their hopes of resistance melting away, and were drawn, at last, into the general treaty ; which, despite their protests, contained no mention of the Princes' liberty.

Claire-Clémence, who had acted throughout the siege with unfailing courage and presence of mind,

¹ Guy Patin, *Lettres*.

² Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

³ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

now found herself well-nigh deserted, and was forced to appear before the Queen as a suppliant for mercy. Her consistent ill-fortune had never been more pitifully apparent ; no woman had ventured, or suffered, more in the Prince's cause, yet it was fated that she should take no direct part in his release. All she could obtain from the Queen was an indefinite promise, qualified by rebuke : " Ma cousine, I am glad to hear you acknowledge your fault. You set yourself in the wrong way to gain your end ; but now that you use other means, I will consider when, and how, you may receive satisfaction ". Leave was granted her to retire, with her son, to Montrond, where she spent the next few months almost in solitude.

The Princess Dowager had petitioned the Parliament in vain ; Condé's allies among the members were few as yet, and could offer little resistance to the majority. Exiled from Paris, and crushed by grief and humiliation, she took refuge with her cousin, the Duchesse de Châtillon, at the castle of Châtillon-sur-Loing ; where, not long after, she was stricken by the illness from which she never recovered. The Duchess, gifted, ambitious, and unscrupulous, kept the dying woman entirely in her power. No other relations were allowed to visit her, or to hold any private communication with her ; and at her death it was discovered that to the ' beloved and faithful kinswoman ' who had thus tended her, were bequeathed the greater part of the late Princess's jewels, and the whole estate of Merlou, or Mello, an ancient domain of the Montmorency family.

Condé was not likely to resent these dispositions in favour of the Duchess Isabelle. Lenet had seen indications of her growing power over the Prince, even before his captivity ; a power such as no woman had exercised since the days of his love for Marthe du Vigan. In the earliest days of the Chantilly clique there had been signs of a dawning attachment between ' M. le Duc ' and Isabelle de Montmorency ; but two powerful factors had intervened : Châtillon's passion for Isabelle, and the irresistible charm of Marthe. Condé, as has been seen, had spared no pains to further the Châtillon marriage, and had consistently respected his friend's wife ; but he was not proof against the enchanting influence of Madame de Châtillon as a widow ;

while she, recognising her opportunity, determined to extend her own power through the conquest of M. le Prince. Shortly after the Princes' arrest, Lenet had visited her, and found her prepared to do her utmost in their cause. Soon, through her efforts, Condé had found an advocate in the President Viole, his former antagonist in debate, but now the slave of the Duchess. Viole placed himself at the head of a Parliamentary faction in the Princes' favour; and among his followers was Deslandes-Payen, who had so fiercely withstood Condé on the vexed question of expenditure. The Parliament had no reason to love M. le Prince; but, as months passed, and he was no longer present with them, as an incarnate spirit of discord, they remembered that Mazarin was likely, in the end, to prove a worse enemy. The petition of the Princess Dowager, which was rejected at the end of April, might have met with a different reception in September. No less a triumph for Madame de Châtillon was the winning of the Duc de Nemours, the son-in-law of that arch-enemy, the Duc de Vendôme. Nemours, younger than Condé by two or three years, had been numbered among the 'damoiseaux' of Chantilly, and had played an active part in the Flanders campaign of 1646. According to contemporary records, he was not handsome; he is described as sandy-haired, narrow-chested, high-shouldered; yet, 'avec tout, sa personne plaisait',¹ and of his powers of fascination there can be no doubt. Of the many lovers of the Duchess Isabelle, he was believed to be the only one whom she favoured for his own sake, rather than from motives of interest. On his side, at this time, subjection was complete; so much so that his lady prevailed on him, without great difficulty, to offer his services for the release of a dangerous rival. Lenet, watching, was lost in admiration of the skill with which the Duchess conducted this manœuvre; "balancing", as he says, "her inclination and her interests, one against the other". Nemours had no striking gifts as a politician; but his rank, his social influence, and his connection with Vendôme, made him no slight acquisition to the Princes' party.

The failure of the 'army of release' in Guyenne was, beyond question, disheartening; but Condé's adherents found consolation at hand in the complaints

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

of the frondeurs against Mazarin, and in the gradual transformation of popular feeling. The spectacle of 'M. le Prince en pénitence' had lost its novelty; and it had been proved that oppression and civil war still continued, even when the 'effroyable Rodomont' was safely within four walls. After the captives had left Vincennes, the room that Condé had occupied was visited by persons of all classes, who showed 'curiosity and respect' rather than exultation, and who were especially impressed by the sight of the historic carnations¹ on the ramparts. On every side the Cardinal was superseding M. le Prince as an object of public hatred; the national resentment against him had only smouldered, to break out afresh. Turenne's expected march on Paris was heralded by placards, devised by the Princes' friends, and posted at the street corners, calling on all good citizens to rally against the foreigner; and the attempt to remove them ended in a free fight between the townspeople and Mazarin's officers. Later in the autumn the frondeurs found their grievance increased tenfold. The Prince, whom they had struggled to keep in their own hands, and whose journey to Marcoussis had first incensed them, was carried still farther beyond their reach. Mazarin having disposed of the rebellion in the south, was redoubling his efforts against Turenne and the Archduke; and had at length decided on installing the Court near Paris, while he advanced in person to the scene of action. War had no attractions for him; but he was probably in less danger from Turenne's soldiers than he might have been from the people of Paris, had any tumult arisen. The magic of the King's presence was withheld from this expedition; for the Queen had fallen ill, on leaving Bordeaux, and could only travel by slow stages to Fontainebleau, where she recovered her health before returning to Paris at the end of the year. Mazarin had resolved not to set out on his campaign till he had taken every precaution for the prisoners' safety, regardless of the frondeurs' discontent, or of any other consideration. "The guarding of the Princes", he wrote,

¹ The sight inspired Mademoiselle de Scudéry to compose a 'quatrain', which she wrote on the wall:

"En voyant ces œillets qu'un illustre guerrier,
Arrosa de sa main qui gagnait des batailles,
Souviens-toi qu' Apollon a bâti des murailles,
Et ne t'étonne plus de voir Mars jardinier".

"is the most important matter that we have in hand". Marcoussis did not satisfy him; the position was too much isolated; moreover, it appeared that, since their arrival, the Princes had found means of re-establishing communications with their friends. Bar confesses, grudgingly, to Mazarin, that he has now no fault to find with Condé's behaviour: "Truth compels me to bear witness that his conduct, as well as that of the other prisoners, is in neither contrary to the respect due to Their Majesties, or disobliging to their servants";¹ but all the while a new plot was in the making. M. le Prince was to escape in a small boat, specially contrived, across the river which surrounded the castle. Nemours, with the help of Arnould 'le carabin', had won over the soldiers outside the walls; and of the seven men stationed at the door of the Prince's room, four were in league with him. This was the second scheme of the kind devised at Marcoussis; the first had been betrayed by the careless talk of some of the Princes' party at Court, and now, hope was again destroyed. On November 15th, Bar received orders for the instant transference of his prisoners from Marcoussis to the strong fortress of Havre. They were to be guarded on the road by a cavalry escort eight hundred strong, under no less a commander than the Comte d'Harcourt. Condé's anger, at first, knew no bounds. Not only was his plan of escape foiled; but the humiliation of being paraded through the country as a captive, mocked at or commiserated in every place where he passed, was intolerable. He was forced to console himself by ridiculing Harcourt; who, though he had justly earned a high reputation as a soldier, had no outward elegance to recommend him. Condé remembered the nickname bestowed on himself: "What," he said, "has the great Comte d'Harcourt become a bear-leader?" Then, conscious of his own slim figure, and swift movements, he added: "I protest, M. de Bar, that if the question were put, whether he or I were the bear, no one would hesitate to name him". On the journey, he begged those of his escort who rode nearest the carriage to keep to the side of the road, that he might have a better view of the Count on horseback; Harcourt, it may be gathered, was not a graceful rider, and the sight gave great pleasure to his prisoner. The verse improvised

¹ * *Archives Etrangères*, Paris.

by M. le Prince on the occasion, was long quoted by his followers :

“Cet homme gros et court ;
Si connu dans l'histoire ;
Ce grand Comte d'Harcourt,
Tout rayonnant de gloire ;
Qui secourut Casal, et qui reprit Turin,
Est maintenant recors ¹ de Jules Mazarin ”.

Harcourt had not added to his dignity in public opinion by accepting such a mission ; the nickname of ‘ the bailiff ’ was repeated on all hands. Condé's allies drew great advantage from it ; and popular feeling was further stirred by a print which they caused to be circulated, representing Harcourt, armed to the teeth, leading the disarmed Prince in chains.

The journey to Havre occupied eleven days ; November 15th to 26th. The prisoners were lodged in the ‘ donjon ’, or keep, and guarded, to all appearance, as strictly as before ; but their secret correspondence was soon organised, and flourished vigorously. Possibly Bar may have suspected a turn of the tide, and relaxed his watchfulness in some slight degree ; in any case, Retz affirms that “ the post between Paris and Lyons was not better regulated ” than the communication between the Princes and their friends. Certain authorised letters, from Madame la Princesse to her husband, or from agents, on acknowledged matters of business, were now allowed to pass openly, after due inspection. By this means, no doubt, the prisoners heard details of the two losses—widely different, yet both touching Condé nearly—which befell their party before the close of the year ; the death of the Princess Dowager (December 2nd) at Châtillon-sur-Loing ; and that of La Moussaye a few days earlier, at Stenay. The *Muze Historique* of Loret, which records, in doggerel verse, the chief events and current opinions of the day, makes pathetic mention of this ‘ serviteur fidèle et rare ’ whose grief had aggravated the fever of which he died ; who, since the day of the Prince's arrest :

“ Sans se réjouir un seul brin,
Avait toujours quelque chagrin ;
Et cela, comme on conjecture,
L'a fait aller en sépulture ”.

¹ ‘ Recors ’ ; bailiff.

La Moussaye had not the military gifts of Boutteville or of Châtillon ; but the value of his faithful testimony, as eye-witness of the Prince's actions, is such, that not one of the ' *petits-mâîtres* ' can claim to have done their leader truer or more lasting service. The loss of the Princess Dowager, from a party point of view, was scarcely more than nominal ; for months past she had had neither health nor spirit for playing any active part. Condé was believed to have written her affectionate letters during her illness ; after her death, his regrets took the characteristic form of a special message to the Queen, begging that his present situation might not rob the burial of the late Princess of the honours due to her rank. Claire-Clémence sends her husband a formal letter of condolence ; mainly interesting as containing one of the earliest references to Condé's personal intercourse with his son. Careless as he was in his domestic relations, the Prince had still thought it worth while to write a separate letter from his prison to a child of seven years old. " My son ", says the Princess, " is full of delight over the letter which you did him the honour to write to him ; I send you the account of his character and occupations, which I think will give you pleasure ".¹

Retz had every reason to speak with authority on the subject of the prisoners' secret correspondence. His natural animosity against the Cardinal was almost as strong as that of Condé himself, and had lately been heightened by a private grievance ; for Mazarin, obviously in fear of a rival, had refused to nominate the Coadjutor for a Cardinal's hat. No more was needed to shatter their temporary alliance. The King's troops were continuously successful in the provinces ; their crowning triumph was won on December 15th, in the defeat of Turenne near Réthel ; but meanwhile a secret agency had been formed in Paris, of which it was truly said that such a ' *corps invisible* ' was worth more than many regiments. Montreuil was still foremost in devising practical details ; but the leading spirit of the organisation, as a whole, was Anne de Gonzague, Princess Palatine, whose political ability and clear-headedness accomplished more for the Prince's cause than the devotion of Claire-Clémence, or even than the arts of Madame de Châtillon. Retz, though he had already " a natural inclination to serve

¹ A.C., December, 1650.

M. le Prince", admits having been greatly impressed by the arguments of 'la Palatine'; while the Premier, Président Molé, could not resist her appeals in the name of justice, and of the law which he himself had helped to impose, against arbitrary imprisonment. At the same time she provided for all contingencies by maintaining a friendly correspondence with Mazarin; urging him to free M. le Prince and to combine with him against the frondeurs. The Cardinal might have paid some heed to her advice, but for the victory of Réthel, which had given him a false sense of security; as it was, he would listen neither to threats nor to arguments; till the Princess finally threw the whole weight of her influence into the scale against him. Before his return to Paris, a treaty—or rather several treaties—had been agreed on between the partisans of Condé and the frondeurs. Madame de Chevreuse hesitated to lose the Queen's favour a second time; but she was lured by the Princess Palatine with the promise of negotiations for a marriage between Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. Special treaties, skilfully adapted to private ambitions, were signed by Nemours, Viole, Retz, the 'Garde des Sceaux' Châteauneuf,¹ the Counsellor Fouquet de Croissy, and several of the nobles. Retz, who had succeeded to a large share of La Rivière's influence, was for some time engaged in the inevitable struggle over Monsieur's wavering sympathies; even when convinced by argument, and bribed by promises of leadership, His Royal Highness could not bring himself to take the decisive step of adding his name, in writing, to the list. At length a messenger hunted him down, by dint of following him through the Luxembourg, with an inkstand in one hand, and a copy of the treaty in the other; stood over him while he signed it, and then fled with it, lest he should change his mind.

On December 18th came tidings of Turenne's defeat, and of the destruction of the 'army of release'. The Princes' party were for a moment dismayed; but the position they had made for themselves was not dependent upon armies. It was grounded, far more surely, on the national hatred of Mazarin, and this forcible demonstration of his power, spreading alarm in all

¹ Charles de l'Aubépine, Marquis de Châteauneuf; succeeded Séguier in this office, July, 1650.

classes, might almost have been called by them a blessing in disguise. Two days later an official petition, sent by Madame la Princesse from Montrond, was presented by Deslandes-Payen at the Palais de Justice ; and in the debate that followed, Retz ' lifted the mask '. He boldly urged the Parliament to remonstrate with the Queen, and to demand that the Princes should be delivered to them to be judged, according to the Declaration of 1648 ; if they were guilty, to be punished, and if not, to be set free. At the same time, he made a violent attack on the Cardinal, declaring him responsible for all the disorders in the State. News of this debate, and of the resolution adopted to appeal to the Queen, was communicated as soon as possible to the prisoners. In return, came a scrap of paper signed with Condé's peculiar cipher of his initials, and addressed to Viole, whose pseudonym for the correspondence was ' Brutus ' : " Your note gave us the greatest joy in the world. . . . We send you written authority to act for us ; leaving the rest to your goodwill and your capacity, from which we hope all things ".¹ The written authority or ' pouvoir ', was signed by all three Princes, and referred specially to an agreement with Monsieur. Viole and the Princess Palatine made use of it to the utmost. A betrothal was to be arranged between the Duc d'Enghien and Monsieur's third daughter, a child of two years old. Conti was definitely plighted to Mademoiselle de Chevreuse ; Retz was to be a Cardinal ; Châteauneuf, Prime Minister ; and other rewards were to be freely distributed.

Mazarin, returning exultant from his campaign, had not been many days in Paris before the knowledge was forced upon him that neither Havre nor any prison in France would hold the Princes for long. In a moment, as it seemed to him, his position had changed ; he was no longer a conqueror, but a man on the verge of ruin. The stroke of the flight to St. Germain, which had saved him two years earlier, was not to be repeated ; the Parisians were on the watch, and the Queen found herself and her son little better than prisoners in the Palais-Royal. Mazarin's only hope was that he might yet lay the Princes under some obligation to himself for their liberty ; but the time was almost past, even for this last resource. Gramont, who, alone of Condé's

¹ A.C., January, 1651.

intimate friends, was still on genuinely good terms with the Court, was dispatched to Havre ; there, if possible, to impose conditions of release on M. le Prince, and to discover the extent of his dealings with the frondeurs. Neither mission was successful. Condé had given unlimited authority to his partisans, and had promised to execute all that they might undertake in his name ; but he was far too much on his guard to admit such a transaction, so long as the Cardinal kept any vestige of power. Gramont knew him too well to expect his full confidence, and could only report to Mazarin that the Prince's state of mind appeared satisfactory : " He did not exaggerate matters, like a prisoner who wishes to be free at all costs, but spoke like a reasonable man, who means to keep his word ". He laughed at the notion that he had already signed a treaty vowing to bring about Mazarin's ruin ; " and indeed ", says Gramont, " he is too clever a man for me to believe that he could be persuaded into taking such a step, under the present circumstances ".¹ As to the conditions of liberty, no conclusion had been arrived at ; and no time was left in which to urge them. The Parliament was clamouring for the Princes' release, and for Mazarin's dismissal ; some members swayed by the arguments of Retz and Viole ; others, like Molé and Broussel, by patriotic dislike of the Cardinal and all his works. The nobles had forgotten the ' guerre des tabourets ', and remembered only that a low-born foreigner was being preferred before them. The climax was reached when Monsieur was wrought upon to declare openly against Mazarin ; and, making full use of an undoubted gift of language, denounced him eloquently to the Parliament. He produced a great effect, in particular, by relating how, during one of their late conversations, the Cardinal had described the leaders of the assembly as " de vrais Fairfax et Cromwells ".

Mazarin, once thoroughly convinced of his danger, gave way to panic. Without waiting for Gramont's news from Havre, he left Paris on foot, and in disguise, on the night of February 6th, and travelled to St. Germain. Four days later, he had started for Havre, accompanied by an armed escort, and carrying with him two secret orders from the Queen. These orders were addressed to Bar ; one was for the immediate

¹ * *Archives Étrangères*, Paris.

release of the three Princes ; the other desired him to obey the Cardinal's instructions in all things, " notwithstanding any subsequent orders from different sources ". Mazarin's private letters show how, in the agitation of the moment, wild designs occurred to him of transporting the Princes, by sea, to some distant land, where they might be held captive till their own country was at peace ; but these only serve to prove his extremity. The main object he hoped to gain by his journey, was that of reaching Havre in time to pose as a liberator, and before any friends of the prisoners could bring news of the public order of release, which, at any moment, the Queen might be compelled to sign. In this, as far as time went, he succeeded ; but the Princes had been too well informed to suppose that they owed him anything for their freedom. On the morning of February 13th he arrived at Havre, and demanded an interview with Bar, which was instantly granted ; but the Cardinal's downfall was an open secret, and he found himself received with scant respect. His escort was refused admittance at the gates, and any lingering hopes of securing the town as a stronghold for his own safety were finally shattered. After a short interval, in which matters were explained to Bar, they entered the prisoners' room together. Mazarin announced " that the Queen restored to them their freedom, unconditionally ; but that she craved their friendship for herself, her Minister, and the State " ; and Bar was requested to read aloud the order of release. Condé received it, as he had done his arrest, ' en prince ' ; he showed no violent emotion, but gravely expressed his gratitude to the Queen for this recognition of their innocence,—“ and to you also, M. le Cardinal ”. Dinner was about to be served, and he invited Mazarin to a place at their table ; healths were drunk, and the meal passed off peaceably, if with some constraint. Nothing remained save for the Princes to take leave of their warder, and to depart in the carriage which Gramont had placed at their disposal ; but Mazarin with the courage of despair, asked first for a private conversation with M. le Prince. For two hours the leave-taking was delayed while they talked together, alone. What passed is only known through their separate testimony, but the insincerity appears to have been tolerably

equal on both sides. Mazarin protested that he had had no hand in the Princes' imprisonment; Condé, chiefly anxious to end the interview, and to be gone, promised absolute devotion to the Queen, and even—so the Cardinal asserted—to her Minister; a promise afterwards recorded by all three Princes in the presence of Gramont and Lionne. Mazarin professed himself entirely satisfied; though Condé's demeanour at the public farewell, when the Princes were escorted to the gates of the citadel, was certainly not reassuring. Till that moment, he had behaved with more circumspection than might have been looked for; but under the stress of impatience and exultation his princely manners at length forsook him. Mazarin bowed low before him; he turned abruptly away; then, realising his liberty, his enemy's humiliation, and the 'marvellous joy', as he said, of feeling himself free "with his sword by his side", he laughed aloud as he stepped into Gramont's carriage, and told the postilion to 'whip up'.

The journey from Havre to Paris was a triumphal progress. On the very day of their departure, the Princes were met on the road by a formal deputation, sent to proclaim their liberty, and forestalled by Mazarin. La Vrillière, Secretary of State, was the official emissary; accompanied by Comminges, who, nothing loth, was to bear the Queen's personal congratulations. With them, to show zeal and friendship for M. le Prince, were Arnauld, Viole, and La Rochefoucauld. Between Pontoise and Paris, it seemed as though all the nobles in France had come out with greetings; some in coaches, others, by hundreds, to escort M. le Prince on horseback; and from St. Denis onwards a dense crowd of the citizens lined the way. Windows, roofs, even the trees by the roadside, were thronged with spectators, and the air rang with the party cry, "Vivent les Princes, et point de Mazarin!" Many chief persons of the Court came out as far as La Chapelle, where an affecting scene took place; the whole company alighted, and Monsieur, embracing the Princes, declared that he had never experienced a more delightful moment. At the Palais-Royal, alone, there were few signs of rejoicing. The Queen coerced by the nobles and the Parliament, terrified by constant threats of rebellion, and, above all, distressed by

Mazarin's flight, could scarcely restrain her tears while she spoke a few conventional words of welcome.

As Condé left the Palace, popular enthusiasm broke out again, and followed him to the Luxembourg, where Monsieur entertained him at supper; crowds stood outside the gates, calling frantically for "le héros, le dieu tutelaire de la France!" "Mon cousin", said Gaston, at last, "I think these people will die to-night, if you do not gratify them"; and with that, he ordered the doors of the great hall to be opened. The multitude surged in, and Condé, facing the onrush, was surrounded, blessed, embraced, and almost torn in pieces. What money and jewels he had with him, he gave away; till nothing of value was left him but his sword: "If that sword was mine!" cried a young officer in the crowd, "I should be the happiest man alive!" "Here it is", answered the Prince, "and may it bring you the baton of a Marshal of France!" Meanwhile, fires were lighted in the streets, casks of wine were broached, and every passer-by was forced to drink the health of M. le Prince, to the sound of songs of triumph:

"Condé, Beaufort aimable,
Longueville et Conti,
Ces quatre princes affables
Soutiennent notre parti;
Quoique Mazarin gronde,
Buvons à leur santé!
Laquais, verse à la ronde,
Ils sont en liberté!"

So the whole night passed. Yet, when the fires of rejoicing had died down, Condé's position, viewed in the cold light of day, was not one to be coveted. Through his own doing, and through the treaties signed by his friends, he was pledged to more promises than he would ever be able or willing to fulfil; and not one of his creditors was likely to be satisfied till he had paid the uttermost farthing.

CHAPTER XV

THE FRONDE OF THE PRINCES

1651-52

THE moral effect produced on M. le Prince by thirteen months' imprisonment was visible, firstly, in his firm resolve never to repeat the experience; secondly, in the weakening of his sense of obligation towards the Crown. His own words, uttered long afterwards to Bossuet, claim that "he had entered prison the most innocent of men and that he had come out the most guilty". So, at least, Bossuet reported, in his famous funeral oration on the Prince; and though some allowance must be made for rhetoric, the statement, applied as it was entirely to political matters, has a substratum of truth. Condé's behaviour, in his personal dealings with the Queen, had at times been nothing short of outrageous; but at each national crisis, as it arose, he had felt himself bound, as though with chains, by the instinctive adherence of a Bourbon, to a Bourbon King. Lenet, who both served and admired the Prince, but who had no confidence whatever in either his principles or his judgment, had waited in the greatest anxiety for the official letter which was to give justification for the arrest; and was relieved beyond measure to find that, in effect, "it had been impossible to convict the prisoner of a worse crime than that of being an ambitious man and no courtier".¹ No act of treason, technically speaking, could be proved against him, to outweigh his great and unquestioned services to the State. Henceforward, however, his attitude was changed. It is true that in the early days of his liberty his followers reproached him with neglecting his opportunities. The way was clear before him; Mazarin, exiled by Act of Parliament,

¹ Lenet, *Mémoires*.

had fled from Havre to Dourlens, and thence, skirting the northern frontier, to a safe refuge at Brühl; the Queen was deserted by Princes and nobles alike. La Rochefoucauld gives his opinion that it would have been no hard task for M. le Prince to set aside the existing form of Government, banish the Queen to a convent, and, while establishing Gaston as Regent, keep the chief power in his own hands. But, if Condé failed to take advantage of his strength, it was no longer from any inherent sense of what was due from him as a Prince of the Blood; so much may be learnt from his own admissions. It was rather that, as La Rochefoucauld goes on to suggest, he was bewildered, at first, by his freedom; just as, had his prison been actually a dungeon, he would have been physically dazzled by the light of day; and thus "the greatness of the enterprise prevented him, in this troubled state, from seeing how easily it might have been accomplished".¹ While he hesitated how best to serve his own interests; whether by heading a rebellion, or by accepting overtures from the Court, the priceless opportunity passed; for, like all advantages which depended on Condé's personal popularity, it had but a brief existence.

At the first news of the Princes' liberty, their friends and kinsfolk flocked to Paris in hot haste to share the triumph; in many cases, to claim a reward. Some of the 'petits-maitres' had first to make their excuses for the ill-success of the 'army of release'. Tavannes writes mournfully of the surrender of Bellegarde, for which he had been responsible: "I hear that Your Highness is greatly incensed against me; I confess that my fault could not have been greater";² but, for the most part, their rejoicings were unqualified. Madame de Longueville was among the first on the road, traveling direct from Stenay. Claire-Clémence, on her way from Montrond, was delayed for some days by illness; but her arrival, when it took place, was greeted with enthusiasm. Condé, for once in his life, had shown signs of appreciating her devotion; he had spoken warmly of his gratitude to her; and when, at length, she came within fifteen miles of Paris, he set out with a long and magnificent train to meet her. They passed in through the city gates, and drove to the Hôtel de Condé,

¹ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

² *A.C., 1651.

seated side by side in the Prince's state coach and hailed by the cheers of the citizens ; one of whom was heard to remark, possibly in sarcasm : " Voilà une femme fort chérie de M. son mari ! " Mademoiselle de Montpensier, paying a visit of congratulation, thought that Madame la Princesse " appeared more intelligent than usual ; she was so overcome with delight at seeing so many people in her house, and at finding herself of such consequence, that she positively surpassed herself ".¹ The words give a vivid impression of the poor little Princess, in her naïve elation, and of the scant sympathy which she inspired. Condé seems to have made a genuine, if shortlived effort to amend his treatment of her ; but she had no power that could hold him, and Madame de Châtillon soon resumed her sway. On one point, however, the Prince's domestic relations began to show a marked change. His indifference towards his son was giving way, by degrees, to more natural feelings of interest and affection. He now directed every detail of the child's education, which was as carefully organised as his own had been, though on less strenuous lines. Bourdelot, who exercised a joint function as doctor and tutor to the little Duke, writes exhaustive accounts of his mental and bodily welfare ; of his progress in Latin, German, and dancing, and of how he " no longer shows repugnance to his compositions " ; also, of how M. le Duc is losing his first teeth— " one of the front ones is loose, and will be the first to fall "—and of the care that must be taken lest the second teeth should grow crooked " and give a bad shape to the mouth ".² All records tend to show that the Duke was a precocious and amusing child, who inherited more of his father's vivacity than of his mother's self-effacing qualities.

Mademoiselle was at no time disposed to look indulgently upon a Princess who had figured, however innocently, as her rival in matters of precedence. She despised Claire-Clémence and had never ceased to resent her position ; the daughter of a mere nobleman was no fit match for the Premier Prince. But towards M. le Prince himself, Mademoiselle's feelings, during the past few months, had completely altered. Perhaps the change was not so sudden as she would have her readers believe, for there is a suggestion of ' protesting too

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² A.C., May, 1652.

much ' in some of the later assertions of her dislike. In her early girlhood she had cordially detested him ; he had questioned her claims, he had laughed at her, and she could not understand his jokes, beyond the fact that they were levelled at herself ; but, when all was said, he was still a Bourbon, and one who, more than any of his contemporaries, so far, had brought glory on his race. The indignity of his imprisonment had been borne in upon her as soon as the first exultation had passed : " I resolved ", she says, " to overcome my unreasonable aversion " ; and, in a short time she succeeded so thoroughly, that Condé, on his release, found no more loyal adherent in Paris than Mademoiselle. Their outward reconciliation took place at the Luxembourg on the evening of the Princes' triumphant return. Condé had been told beforehand that he might safely begin the topic, and he embarked on it with all possible frankness. He had been delighted, he said, to learn from Guitaut that her feelings had changed ; and " after a few compliments ", says Mademoiselle, " we confessed how much we had formerly disliked each other ".¹ Amidst much amusement, they exchanged reminiscences, while all the company gathered round to listen. Mademoiselle acknowledged that she had never known such happiness as on the news of the Princes' arrest ; and Condé, not to be outdone, assured her that he had heard with pleasure of her attack of small-pox, and had hoped fervently that she might be marked ! They parted with great mutual satisfaction and many protestations of friendship. Condé recognised a valuable ally in his kinswoman ; her high spirit appealed to him, and her unfailing popularity with the Parisians might stand him in good stead. Thenceforward he treated her mainly as a comrade, with an occasional touch of gallantry, to show her that her worth was appreciated. Mademoiselle, on her side, makes no secret of her discovery that M. le Prince was the man whom, had he been free, she would have chosen for her husband, next to the King himself. There was no hint of scandalous intrigue between them ; Mademoiselle was not given to sentiment, and her reputation was without a stain. She was a vigorous and efficient partisan of the Prince ; but his wife she considered more than ever as an interloper ; and, in the frequent illnesses of Claire-Clémence,

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

she dwelt on the chances of her recovery with a frankness and matter-of-factness only possible to a Princess of the 'ancien régime'. It should be added that her comments on Madame de Châtillon are even more merciless; she can scarcely admit the fact of Condé's obvious passion; while she exposes the manoeuvres of the Duchess with unflagging zeal, and with more shrewdness than might have been looked for in so downright a character.

Public and private affairs knew no distinctions in those days. Condé, reckoning up his allies, and calculating his advantages, found himself beset by demands and difficulties which would have tried a more equable temper, and far more political skill than he could boast. One leading consideration was that of extricating his party, without loss, from their late dealings with the Spaniards. Turenne, wholly out of his element as a rebel, was appealing to the Prince on the subject of negotiations at Stenay: "Your Highness may judge that I shall have great pleasure in knowing that prompt measures are being taken for concluding an agreement, by some means or other; as I do not wish my stay here to be imputed to any other motive of mine than the promise I gave to Madame your sister, and I shall be delighted to use any honourable way of escape from my present position".¹ Part of the original treaty, signed by both Madame de Longueville and Turenne, had been that, on the release of the Princes, every effort should be made to conclude a 'just and reasonable' peace between France and Spain. Turenne felt himself bound to see that this agreement was carried out; although the Spanish Government had failed to supply the sum of money promised in return. He spent two months in pursuing tedious and unfruitful negotiations, before he was relieved by the arrival of Fouquet de Croissy, as special envoy, at Stenay. Croissy was not destined to be more successful; for it was soon evident that the Spaniards had no intention of ceasing hostilities while the unsettled state of France gave them such hopes of advantage; but Turenne, at least, could feel that he had done his duty, and returned thankfully to Paris. The most obvious result of the negotiations was that, although the citadel of Stenay was still held by the Prince's troops, the Spaniards refused to evacuate the town; and the

¹ A.C., April, 1651.

garrison, with whom they were on the best of terms, made no effort to drive them out. Condé's enemies, not unnaturally, accused him of having planned the surrender of Stenay; and not his enemies only, but some among his own adherents believed, rightly or wrongly, that he secretly paved the way, at this time, for future Spanish transactions on his own account.¹ The letters exchanged between Condé and Turenne during this period, are full of mutual expressions of gratitude and friendship; and the Marshal had no sooner arrived in Paris than M. le Prince visited him, took him in person to pay his respects at Court, and entertained him at dinner. Nevertheless, it was observed that, almost from the first, Turenne held aloof from the Hôtel de Longueville, where the meetings of the Condé faction were usually held. In his own words, he "felt that the Prince, since regaining his liberty, was too much given to changing his mind",² and he was not satisfied to look to him as a leader. Rumours were not wanting that Turenne had other reasons for his withdrawal, and that he was influenced by jealousy; for Madame de Longueville had fallen under the spell of Nemours, and in the hope of outrivalling Madame de Châtillon, openly preferred him before all her court of worshippers. But it seems more probable that the atmosphere of intrigue and disaffection which pervaded the Hôtel de Longueville had become distasteful to such a man as Turenne. He was not outwardly brilliant, or likely to shine in that circle, from a social point of view; and his military enterprises as a rebel had been so consistently unfortunate, that he seemed, when stripped of his loyalty, like Sampson shorn. Bouillon, too, was discontented; his claims for the reward of his services had not met with such prompt attention as he thought they deserved. Both he and his brother were still nominally ranked among Condé's adherents; but, before many months had passed, Mazarin, writing from his seclusion at Brühl, notes the gratifying news that has just reached him: "The Vicomte de Turenne is on very bad terms with M. le Prince".³

The Cardinal's letters, during his exile, are perhaps the most illuminating contemporary record of the policy pursued by the Court between February and September

¹ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

² Turenne, *Mémoires*.

³ *Lettres de Mazarin*.

1651. His instructions are issued, sometimes to the Queen herself, sometimes through the medium of Lionne or Le Tellier. Her pose, according to him, was to be that of a martyr, persecuted by the frondeurs. Since the release of the Princes the Parisian mob had been less violently aggressive; but it was suspected in more than one quarter that the Queen was only awaiting an opportunity to escape, with her son, in order to join the Cardinal, and a strict watch was kept over her movements. In March, Mazarin writes to complain of a ballet having been danced at Court; "All joy", he says, "should be banished"; reports should be diligently spread of the Queen's grief, and of how the King and little Duc d'Anjou 'weep to find themselves prisoners'. No pains are to be spared to win and hold Condé's adherence. The order to 'secure M. le Prince' is reiterated, and one method after another is prescribed: "Insinuate to the Prince that once I am in power I will serve him in every matter that pleases him": or again, "Tell the Queen to make great show of favour towards the Maréchal de Gramont; by this means she may do as she pleases with him, and he is the best instrument for working on M. le Prince". Despite all previous experience, Mazarin seems to have depended sincerely on Condé's latest promises, and even to have looked to him for help: "I do not know what the others (Conti and Longueville) will do", he writes to Lionne; "but knowing his own interests as he (Condé) does, I think he will be as good as his word". Condé, it need scarcely be said, returned to Paris with every intention of keeping the Cardinal in perpetual banishment; and his resolve was at once so evident as to draw indignant protest from the exile: "Il n'y a point de méchanceté pareille à celle de M. le Prince!" All reports tended to show that Condé was linking his interest firmly with those of the Fronde; he was the sworn ally of Monsieur, of the Coadjutor, and of all the Cardinal's bitterest enemies. Mazarin was forced to console himself with the thought of certain influences that had never failed him yet: "I have no doubt", he adds, reassuringly, "that the pride and impetuosity of M. le Prince will soon lose him many followers".

To create and maintain dissension between the Prince and the frondeurs was Mazarin's object now, as

it had been in former years ; but he perceived, only too clearly, the difficulty of conducting the necessary intrigues from a distance. Servien and Lionne, his two principal agents, had been deputed to treat secretly with the Prince. They represented the Cardinal as ready to agree to any conditions that M. le Prince might see fit to suggest ; towns, provinces, influence of every kind—all that he asked was to be promised, in return for his support. Condé had no objection to any alliance which offered such material advantages, and, so far as may be judged, was simply prepared to sell his adherence to the highest bidder. Moreover, he was already out of conceit with many members of his party, who pestered him with claims on his gratitude, till he declared that “ M. de Beaufort was indeed a lucky man to have contrived his escape from prison with no help save that of a few of his own servants ”.¹ But if the followers of Condé knew how to press their interests, they could at least plead their leader's example. M. le Prince had secured the Governorships of four provinces—Anjou, Limousin, Angoumois, and Béarn—for as many of his personal friends. He now demanded Guyenne for himself, Provence for Conti, and Auvergne for Nemours ; intending thus to concentrate his ascendancy, and to create what was not much less than a kingdom in the centre and south of France. For this consideration he was willing to forego the Governorships of Champagne and Burgundy ; but he still kept in his hands a chain of fortresses, reaching to the northern frontier. Each garrison was commanded by a trusted officer of his own ; Persan was at Montrond, Boutteville at Bellegarde, Meille at Clermont-en-Argonne, and Arnauld at Dijon ; while Marsin, than whom the Prince had no more devoted follower, had been restored to his post at the head of an army in Catalonia. ‘ Jugez quel établissement ! ’ exclaims Retz, watching with the usual mixture of admiration and impatience, while M. le Prince played ducks and drakes with his opportunities. The Queen could not bring herself to grant such exorbitant requests without the private sanction of her ex-Minister, and excused herself, as best she might, from a decision till his answer should arrive. Meanwhile dire confusion reigned in her Council, while she, Gaston, and Condé struggled each to keep their

¹ Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

own supporters in important Government posts. Within a month the Great Seal changed hands three times ; Châteauneuf was succeeded by Molé, and Molé by Séguier. The Queen, chiefly anxious to avert any crisis until the autumn, temporised, and made many promises. All her hopes were founded on the knowledge that on September 7th, her son, at thirteen, would declare his majority. His rule, at such an age, could only be nominal ; and she looked to maintain her influence over him, while at the same time she would be relieved of her official responsibility as Regent.

Mazarin, hearing of Condé's expectations, took instant alarm ; it was one matter to make vague promises to the Prince, and another to see them about to be realised in this formidable shape. The instructions to the Queen change their tone ; she must now devote her efforts to securing Retz, and must heap favours upon him, sooner than allow Condé to become omnipotent. If the scheme of Governorships is to be carried out, the Cardinal declares that " M. le Prince will need only to be crowned at Rheims ". These directions could not prevent the Queen from receiving Condé's oath of allegiance and proclaiming him Governor of Guyenne ; though with regard to Conti and Nemours there was still time to hesitate. Every day was of value, for Mazarin had not trusted in vain to the effect of Condé's methods as a party leader. The news of his treaty with the Court had roused the whole Fronde to indignation. Nor was this all. In the strength of his new alliance, he set himself to repudiate any promises made on his behalf, which he now found it inconvenient to fulfil. Foremost among these was the marriage of Conti and Mademoiselle de Chevreuse, the link which was to join the interests of the frondeurs for ever to those of the House of Condé. Conti had no wish to withdraw from his share of the agreement ; Mademoiselle de Chevreuse was beautiful, and well dowered ; and her rank, as a Princess of the House of Lorraine, was above question. He had paid his court assiduously, from the first day of his freedom, and the preparations for the wedding were already being pushed forward. Suddenly there were rumours of an obstacle ; M. le Prince was said to be opposing the marriage, violently dissuading Conti, and speaking in unmeasured terms against Mademoiselle de Chevreuse. Her reputa-

tion was easily attacked ; for the nature of the intrigue between her and the Coadjutor was well known. Condé, needless to say, objected on grounds of etiquette rather than of morality, and declared that the honour of his House would be impaired. This marriage had seemed a small price to pay when his liberty hung in the balance ; but now that it brought him no personal or political advantage, and would certainly destroy his new alliance with the Queen, he allowed his distaste for it full play. Conti's attachment was not proof against the sarcasms of the 'grand frère' ; and it was soon observed that he had ceased his daily visits to the Hôtel de Chevreuse. Retz, with one or two contemporaries, states that Madame de Chevreuse herself offered to release the Prince from his word ; saying, no doubt in irony, that " promises made in prison were never meant to be kept " ; but, if she did so—and the fact is open to doubt—it was only in the hope of modifying, for herself and her daughter, a humiliation which she saw to be inevitable. Condé's course of action was no more diplomatic than usual ; and though accounts differ as to the exact form of message used to break off the marriage negotiations, all are agreed that not the slightest effort was made to show civility or consideration. Madame de Chevreuse was prepared for the blow, but it was none the less crushing ; she had centred many ambitions on her daughter, and this catastrophe seemed likely to destroy all hopes of a brilliant future. " You cannot imagine ", one of Mazarin's correspondents in Paris writes to him, " the confusion and disorder that have resulted. All the pride and glory of the house are fled. The fair Princess must turn her thoughts to a convent, rather than to a husband ; no suitor can now present himself, and, in this matter, she may well be pitied ".¹

The Duchesse de Chevreuse was not a woman to submit tamely to disappointment and indignity. To form a party against M. le Prince was seldom a hard task. Retz shared all the interests of the ladies of Chevreuse, and was further swayed by the Queen's advances, made in obedience to Mazarin ; the Princess Palatine had held herself responsible for the marriage, and deeply resented Condé's action. In a few weeks a coalition was in being, not much less powerful than

¹ * *Archives Etrangères*, Paris.

that which, eighteen months earlier, had compassed the Princes' arrest. Retz had lately been debating between two courses : that of raising a rebellious faction, with Condé and Monsieur at its head ; and, that of combining with the Court against the Prince. Condé's attitude would have gone near to deciding the question, even without Madame de Chevreuse's intervention. Friends and enemies alike are unanimous in declaring that M. le Prince, for all his combative temper, had no natural leaning towards sedition. Apart from any motives of interest, he despised it, as a parody of warfare. The campaigns in which his soul delighted called for space, open plains, and great armies ; war, as understood by the frondeurs, suggested to him only the barricades of the citizens, or the exhausting and inglorious labours of the investment of Paris. When Monsieur, roused to brief indignation by Châteauneuf's dismissal, held a rebellious conclave at the Luxembourg, Retz, and some others of the company, advocated the raising of an armed riot on the spot ; but Condé, to whom all eyes turned as a leader, answered scornfully, and, it must be added, untruthfully, that he had neither skill nor courage for making war in gutters. He declared himself willing to levy troops on Monsieur's behalf, if His Royal Highness felt that matters were ripe for civil war ; an offer which, in view of Gaston's unmilitary tastes, was scarcely more than a form. Retz and the leading frondeurs, enraged at this defection, needed no urging to approach the Queen with schemes for an alliance against M. le Prince. It was currently reported that she was asked to sanction a plot for his assassination, an idea from which she could not but recoil in horror. No course seemed open but that of a second arrest, and from this, the Royal consent was not withheld ; but, without Mazarin's personal supervision, there was small chance of repeating such a stroke. The scheme went slowly forward, delayed by the necessity of communications from Brühl ; and meanwhile all hope of secrecy vanished.

The first warning that reached Condé was through Servien, who, while outwardly devoted to the Cardinal, had discovered private reasons for not wishing his return. Servien hinted at the danger, in talking to Gramont, on whose affection for the Prince he could safely rely. Gramont's determination to stand well at

Court prevented him giving a direct caution ; but he warned Chavigny, confident that the word would be passed on ; and soon all Condé's household are described as " tormenting him to take precautions for his own safety ".¹ For a time he held out against them, sustained by natural recklessness ; but in the end his nerves, unmercifully taxed, betrayed him utterly. At first he merely desisted from visits to the Palais-Royal ; then, as the alarm grew upon him, he surrounded himself, and his dwelling, with an armed guard, to the indignation of many, who saw arrogance rather than fear in such a display. Lastly, there came the shock of a sudden alarm, involving the Prince in as ludicrous an adventure as ever befell a man of his reputation. On the evening of July 6th, the Hôtel de Condé was guarded as usual ; M. le Prince was in bed, but not asleep ; entertained by conversation with Vineuil, a confidential agent, well known as a raconteur. To them enter a messenger, with a letter addressed to Vineuil, warning him that two companies of the King's guards were under arms, and marching on the Faubourg St. Germain, with orders to surround the Hôtel de Condé as a preliminary to the arrest. Like a flash, there passed before Condé a vision of Vincennes, Marcoussis, and the Sieur de Bar ; and, sooner than be taken alive, he was prepared to throw dignity to the winds. He sprang up, ordered his horse, sent word to Conti to join him on the road, and had ridden out of Paris, before it was discovered that the Guards had merely been told off to see that a detachment of Government stores were safely passed into the town at the Porte St. Germain. Nor did the mistake end here. Condé, with some half-dozen attendants, had escaped by way of the Port St. Michel, having arranged to meet Conti at an appointed place on the road to Issy. As the Prince waited at this rendezvous, not far outside the gates, a trampling of many hoofs approaching at a trot was heard through the darkness ; and, firmly convinced that the King's cavalry were pursuing him, he set spurs to his horse, and fled at full speed towards Fleury. Here, in the small hours of the morning, he was joined by his followers, and learnt the humiliating fact that he had been put to flight by a company of peasants ; the ' coquetiers ', or poulterers, of Houdan, who were hurry-

¹ Goulas, *Mémoires*.

ing into the city to bring their supplies in good time for the market.

Probably there was no man in France whose fame could so well have withstood such an experience ; even the street poets made surprisingly little use of it. But Condé, while he laughed, perforce, over his own discomfiture, was in deadly earnest where the risk of imprisonment was concerned. The alarm had been false for the moment, but a real danger existed none the less, and he was by no means prepared, at that moment, to face it. From Fleury he travelled, on the following day, to his seat of St. Maur-des-Fossés, a castle on the outskirts of the forest of Vincennes, built where the river Marne forms a peninsula, and secures it on three sides from approach. No place could have better served his present need ; he was practically safe from any sudden attack, and yet not too far removed from the centre of affairs. This refuge no sooner became known than he was joined by Madame de Longueville, by Conti, and by many personal adherents ; besides those whom La Rochefoucauld speaks of as ' les incertains '. Nemours, and La Rochefoucauld himself, were early arrivals ; Bouillon and Turenne followed, with offers of support. The Court, at first, could only give way to laughter ; but it soon became evident that the situation was serious, to say the least. Condé's abrupt departure had almost amounted to a declaration of war ; and he now refused to stir from St. Maur, where a powerful faction was gathering round him.¹ The Queen felt bound to make some outward show of conciliation ; Gramont was once more chosen as special messenger, and arrived at St. Maur laden with assurances that the Queen pledged her word for the safety of M. le Prince. Condé had already prepared a statement to the effect that he had no rebellious intentions, but that the designs of his enemies had forced him to seek safety. He would only

¹ " Environ huit cents gentils-hommes,
Et deux ou trois cents moindres hommes,
Le lendemain les furent voir ;
Qui par respect, qui par devoir,
Qui par raison, qui par prudence,
Qui par simple révérence,
Qui par hasard, qui tout exprés,
Qui pour ses propres intérêts,
Qui mêmes par mutinerie,
Et qui par fanfaronnerie ".

consent to receive Gramont in the presence of several witnesses, before whom he declared that the Queen's word was not enough ; she had deceived him before, and was ' habile à ce métier ' ; he would never return to Court till those ' valets of the Cardinal ', Servien, Lionne, and Le Tellier had been dismissed from their posts.¹ Gramont carried back the message, with all its discourtesy ; then, unwilling to take up arms either for or against the Prince, he left Paris, and withdrew to his estates at Bidache, in Béarn.

Eight weeks of political turmoil followed Condé's flight, before the inevitable climax was reached and open war declared ; weeks during which it would be difficult to say which of the leading combatants played the least edifying part. Condé knew in his heart, even while he struggled against the knowledge, that the die was cast, and that he was fated to lead a civil war ; all that remained to him was to secure as much influential support as possible. Two days after he reached St. Maur, he sent Conti to deliver a statement of justification to the Parliament ; and La Rochefoucauld was dispatched with a like message to Monsieur. The Parliament, headed by Molé, were at no pains to hide their disapproval ; although hatred of Mazarin moved them to make a request that assurances of safety might be given to the Prince. The Queen replied by an act of concession ; Servien, Lionne, and Le Tellier were dismissed ; but, in order that some show of authority might be maintained, Chavigny was also banished from the Council. Condé still held aloof from the Palace, and slept every night at St. Maur ; he consented, however, to spend some hours in Paris, on July 21st, and to thank the Parliament, in person, for their efforts on his behalf. Molé spoke to him, as the Counsellor Talon says, ' in the language of a father ', pointing out that the Queen had complied with nearly all his requests, and exhorting him to be reconciled to her ; in particular not to leave Paris that day without visiting the Palais-Royal. Condé, as was well known, had no gift for oratory ; his attitude before Molé was that of a child in disgrace ; ashamed, but unrepentant. He made a halting, indefinite answer, and withdrew ; only to return directly to his rebel counsellors at St. Maur. More than once, during the next month, he repeated his visit to Paris,

¹ Madame de Motteville, *Mémoires*.

passing sometimes before the very doors of the Palace, but, to the scandal of both Court and Parliament, never setting foot within. On one occasion he met the King face to face driving in the Cours-la-Reine, and still made no attempt to seek an interview. Further defiance was seen in the gaieties organised at St. Maur, where M. le Prince was holding a court scarcely less brilliant than that of the Palais-Royal. The influence of Madame de Longueville had never been more in the ascendant; and nothing could be more characteristic of the age than the ardour with which she urged her brother to plunge the country into a civil war, in order that she might have a pretext for not returning to her husband, with whom she was on the worst of terms; for Longueville, persuaded by his daughter, had cut himself off from his wife's family, and shown a pronounced leaning towards the Court. La Rochefoucauld, notwithstanding his protests, and his growing jealousy of Nemours, seems to have seconded the Duchess vigorously; and the treaty, dated July 22nd, which marks a decisive step towards open rebellion, is written in his hand. "We, the undersigned, declare that we persist in securing safety for the person of M. le Prince, and of all who sign this paper, by every means in our power, and even by force of arms if need be".¹ The signatures are those of Condé, his brother and sister, Nemours, Viole, and La Rochefoucauld. Each one of the six is further pledged to enter on no negotiations without the consent of the remaining five; and, should they resort to arms, no peace is to be concluded till all shall declare themselves satisfied. These terms once agreed upon, the circle of St. Maur judged it well to separate. Madame de Longueville, with Madame la Princesse and the Duc d'Enghien retired to Montrond; Condé, deprived of all excuse for absence by the dismissal of the 'Cardinal's valets', consented to return to Paris, guarded as before.

Once established at the Hôtel de Condé, he could no longer refuse to appear before the Queen; and, after some persuasion, he presented himself at the Palace, accompanied by Monsieur, who did his best to relieve the situation; but the visit is described as 'brief and cold', and was not repeated. Mutual recriminations were exchanged by the two parties.

¹ The original document is among the *Archives of Chantilly*.

before the Parliament; the Prince denouncing his enemies as 'Mazarins,' and accusing them in the Council of secretly treating with the Cardinal; they, in answer, pointing to the warlike preparations now being made in all the strongholds of the Condé family. On August 17th, just three weeks before the date of the King's majority, the Queen, with the help and advice of Retz and Châteauneuf, sent to the Parliament a solemn indictment of the Prince's conduct. The discourse opened diplomatically with renewed assurances against Mazarin's return; it then proceeded to publish the misdeeds of 'our cousin the Prince of Condé'. He had sown dissension in the Queen's Council, and had brought charges against her Ministers; worse still, he had entered into negotiations with a foreign power (Spain), and had sent orders to the officers in his fortresses which could only be accepted as preparations for civil war.

These two latter accusations brought Condé next day to the Palais de Justice, 'l'œil brillant, et le cœur hardi';¹ hotly protesting his innocence, and denying charges, some of which were only too well founded. The toils of faction had closed round him. His aversion to the prospect of civil war was perfectly genuine, and he had little confidence in those who were urging him to it; he would not have been surprised to learn that—as was actually the case—they had signed another treaty among themselves, agreeing to combine against him on the smallest provocation. But his moral nature had not the toughness of fibre which would have enabled him to withstand their persuasion; only a man of iron could have resisted such influence, and Condé's temperament was rather one of quicksilver. The debates in which he sought to justify himself were almost farcical, but the prevailing excitement was so great that farce might, at any moment, have been turned to bloodshed. Retz and Condé publicly exchanged taunts and insults in the great hall of the Palais de Justice; while, on the steps and in the ante-rooms of the building, there waited bands of armed followers, who needed but a signal to engage in open fight. The Queen, it was said, "since she hated both factions equally, would have been glad if they and their leaders had killed each other to the last

¹ Loret, *Muze Historique*.

man";¹ but since she was still obliged to confer favours upon Retz, she sent a company of her own guards to protect him. Monsieur was definitely taking part against her; terrorised by Condé, who threatened him, and was even believed to have struck him, in private, he read aloud before the Parliament, on August 19th, a statement which declared the Prince justified in all his actions. At the third debate (August 21st) the hope of a free fight was within an ace of being realised. Molé, protesting against the use of the ante-rooms as a 'place d'armes', requested M. le Prince to withdraw his followers. Condé made no objection, and deputed La Rochefoucauld to see that the order was carried out; Retz, eager to assert his equality on this point, announced that his men also should withdraw, and pushed before the Duke to give the word in the ante-room. Then followed a most unseemly scuffle, in the course of which Retz was pinioned between the folding-doors of the hall, and believed, as did everyone present, that his last hour had come. His audacity never failed him: "Keep calm, my friend", he cried to La Rochefoucauld, "we can do each other no harm; for you are a coward, and I am a priest!" "I lied", he adds, in parenthesis, "for he (La Rochefoucauld) is full of courage". Two or three officers, intervening, contrived to release the victim, and ordered out the men-at-arms; but Retz attended no more debates till the crisis had passed. Yet, with all this open hostility, he and Condé showed a lurking mutual regard in their dealings; each felt the other to be a worthy opponent; and the Prince, on one occasion at least, did his enemy no small service. It happened that, on the day after this encounter in Parliament, the annual religious procession of the 'Grande Confrérie' was passing from the Church of the Cordeliers to that of La Madeleine de la Cité. In the centre of the procession, following the relics and the Blessed Sacrament, and at the head of the clergy of Paris, walked the Coadjutor, vested in his pontifical habit, and 'with the outward seeming of a St. Ambrose'.² As they turned into the Rue du Paon, the Grande Confrérie found themselves face to face with a retinue of a very different kind; M. le Prince was coming from the Palais de Justice, with La Rochefoucauld

¹ Montglat, *Mémoires*.² Goulas, *Mémoires*.

and Rohan in his coach, and a train of nobles, armed men, and citizens in attendance. At the sight of Retz, a tumult rose among the Prince's suite, who raised the cry, 'Au Mazarin!' and prepared to attack the enemy in good earnest, defenceless as he was, and surrounded by priests and choristers. Condé stepped from his carriage, ordered back his followers, and, falling on one knee, asked the Coadjutor for his blessing. Retz, perfectly aware of Condé's unorthodox views, played his part with keen appreciation. As a dignified prelate he blessed the son of the Church; then, uncovering his head, he gravely saluted the Prince; neither betrayed himself by look or word, and the procession passed on. The story, told with infinite amusement by M. le Prince, gave great entertainment, an hour or two later, to Gaston and a select audience at the Luxembourg.

The Parliament, still acting out of opposition to Mazarin, agreed, after some hesitation, that the Queen should be requested to declare herself satisfied, and to withdraw her accusations against the Prince. But now, when only a few days must pass before the King's majority was declared, his mother was no longer anxious to conciliate Mazarin's chief enemy; she was rather disposed to drive him to extreme measures, hoping, in the first disturbance, to find a pretext for recalling her Minister. Monsieur, who leant towards peace at any price, offered himself as mediator between the Prince and the Court; but his methods only served to widen the breach between them. The Queen had deliberately challenged Condé's displeasure by further changes in the Ministry; two of his opponents, Château-neuf and Molé, were recalled, contrary to his known wishes. To Monsieur, and to the parliamentary delegates, she professed herself willing to withdraw her charges; but she refused to make a formal announcement to this effect, until the Prince should have manifested his loyalty by doing public homage on the occasion of the King's majority. Condé, on his side, maintained that it was impossible for him to take part in any ceremony of the kind while such imputations were made against him; and the news of Molé's and Châteauneuf's appointments confirmed his decision. The 7th of September came, and passed. Louis rode in state to the Palais de Justice, and took

up the reins of government in due form; but the Premier Prince, who should have played a notable part, was conspicuous only by his absence. His place was filled by Conti, a most inefficient substitute, from every point of view. Condé had retired to Chantilly, and was there stifling, not without difficulty, the last vestiges of his inherent distaste for civil war. The Bourbon instinct, which he had believed to be extinguished by the wrongs of his captivity, stirred again, at the eleventh hour, and tormented him. Yet the present attitude of the Court, as well as that of his allies, was likely to leave him no choice. His letter to the King, explaining the reasons of his absence from the ceremony, was left unanswered; and the Queen, in spite of Monsieur's representations, was refusing even to postpone the recall of Molé and Châteauneuf. Already the King's troops had received orders to march against the remnant of the 'army of release', and Tavannes was driven to make a hasty retreat towards Stenay. No course seemed open to the Prince but that of quitting Chantilly for some stronghold in one of his own provinces, and there gathering his forces for open war. Montrond was appointed, accordingly, as a rendezvous; and two days after the momentous 7th of September he set out on his journey. Even in the moment of starting, he wrote to Monsieur, announcing his departure, but leaving a loop-hole for the reopening of negotiations. As fate would have it, almost the same hour brought fresh instructions to the Queen from Mazarin; M. le Prince was not to be driven to extremities, lest civil war should give too great an opportunity to the enemies of France. Forthwith, the Ministerial appointments were cancelled, and Monsieur was empowered to send the tidings to the Prince. But Monsieur had no notion of haste in any undertaking. La Rochefoucauld accuses him of delaying to write, for twenty-four hours, out of pure indolence; Retz, by a more elaborate theory, of secretly ordering the messenger to make a pretence of confusing Augerville-la-Rivière—where Condé was to await his answer—with Angerville, near Étampes, and so to arrive only after the Prince had continued his way. In either case, the result was the same. Condé waited at Augerville for a day and a night, growing each moment more exasperated, as he saw his advances

treated with apparent neglect. On the second morning his mind was made up; he set forth again, and had ridden as far as Bourges when the belated messenger overtook him, and presented the dispatch. Monsieur reported the Queen's concession, but the general tone of his letter was vague and strictly non-committal. The Prince is said to have told his followers that if this letter had come earlier, it might have changed his decision; but that since he was already in the saddle, he would not dismount for such uncertain hopes. No doubt the enthusiastic greeting given him by the citizens of Bourges was fresh in his mind, and had raised his expectations of national support. On September 15th he came to Montrond, and was there received with renewed urgings to declare war. Madame de Longueville, La Rochefoucauld, Nemours, all the circle of St. Maur, joined in persuasion. Condé turned on them at last: "Well, you shall have your way. I will make war! But remember what I tell you. I draw the sword now, against my will; and for all that, I shall be the last to sheathe it!"

Thus was inaugurated the last phase of the 'Fronde of the Princes'. The time, so far as Condé was concerned, was not propitious. He had delayed too long; if he was to head a rebellion, his decision should have been taken some seven months earlier, in the first triumph of his release, when the Princes and the great mass of the nobles would have supported him without question. Now, when his vacillations had caused widespread discontent, he found many defaulters among those whom he had reckoned his allies. Monsieur would declare for neither side; in the words of one of Mazarin's informants, "Son Altesse Royale ne sait sur quel pied danser".¹ Longueville, whom the Prince visited at Trie, near Paris, could not resist a personal appeal, and promised adherence; but Condé had no sooner left him than he wavered, and sent a messenger in pursuit retracting his word. Gramont would take no active part on either side, and continued in retirement. Condé writes to him in terms which mark the difference between their public and private intercourse: "You know me well enough not to doubt my grief on finding myself driven by my enemies to take my present resolve; but my life, my honour, and all else that concerns me,

¹ * *Affairs Etrangères*, Paris.

are involved. You know all my thoughts, and that I was reduced to the last extremity before taking this decision ; but, since they have forced me into it, I shall act in such a way as to make them repent ; and to you, from whom I can hide nothing, I say that I will spare no pains to triumph in the end. I have such means at hand, and so little regard for my enemies, as to feel no uneasiness. I wish with all my heart that nothing may occur, in this vexatious business, to lessen our friendship ; I, on my part, will do all I can to prevent it, and I doubt not but that you will do the same on yours ; and I hope you will do nothing against me without first telling me that you are forced into it ; for till then I shall take no steps to defend myself from you, knowing that you would only act in such a way on compulsion ”.¹

Gramont's attitude, for purposes of war, was practically neutral, as was that of most members of his family : “ I think you will not wish to be the first to declare war against us ”,² Condé writes to the Comte de Gramont-Toulangeon, the ‘ Prince d'Amour ’ of Chantilly. The great families of La Force and La Trémouille declared for the Prince ; but on the death of the old Marshal de la Force, not long afterwards, his son withdrew the promised support. All defections, however, paled before that of Turenne ; on whom, in spite of some personal coolness, Condé had still relied, and to whom, as soon as war was declared, he had written, offering the command of the troops on the northern frontier. But Turenne had done with rebellion ; any personal motives that attached him to the Prince's cause had vanished in the past few months. He declined the appointment ; and Bouillon, knowing him resolved, sent back by Condé's messenger—Gourville—instead of a promise of adherence, suggestions by which the Prince's party might, even now, make terms with the Court.

Condé was enraged by Turenne's refusal, which deprived him of an invaluable ally, and rudely shook the confidence he had expressed to Gramont. In his anger, “ he was more bent ”, says Gourville, “ on not doing what the Duc de Bouillon proposed, than on consulting his own and his friends' interests ”. He made no attempt to conciliate the Duke, but set himself immediately to strengthen his position by other means.

¹ *A.C.*, September, 1651.

² *A.C.*, September, 1651.

Lenet was dispatched to conclude a treaty with the King of Spain in Madrid ; while Gourville, that untiring conspirator, asked, and obtained, leave to set out for Paris, there to kidnap and imprison the Coadjutor, whose influence was holding Monsieur to the Court. The plot was skilfully laid, but failed, owing to a chance which caused Retz to leave the Hôtel de Chevreuse in a friend's carriage, instead of in his own. Lenet's mission, on the other hand, brought about results of infinite importance. He came from Madrid bearing the conditions which for eight years were to bar the way against Condé's return to loyalty. The treaty was drawn up on the same lines as that signed, eighteen months earlier, by Madame de Longueville and Turenne ; Spain was to furnish money, troops for the northern frontier, and a fleet for the Gironde, in return for the alliance of M. le Prince. It should be observed that Condé, as a Prince of the Blood, treats with Philip of Spain on equal terms ; his nominal attitude, throughout, is that of the King's ally, not of a General in his pay. The additions to the treaty included Condé's promise to surrender a French port to the Spanish fleet ; and a stipulation that he himself should hold the chief command over the united forces, wherever he might be present with them. Chief of all were the clauses relating to the possible conclusion of peace ; clauses which, as the French historian of the House of Condé has pointed out, seemed at one time likely to wreck the Prince's career beyond all hope, and which were yet to save and restore him in the end.¹ " The troops of M. le Prince "—so runs the agreement—" are not to lay down their arms until a just, equal, and honourable peace shall have been concluded between France and Spain " ; and " His Catholic Majesty " is pledged " to make no peace with France without the consent of M. le Prince, and without assuring him just and reasonable satisfaction ".

Condé's plan of campaign had been devised while he still counted on Turenne's adherence. Two armies were to march upon Paris ; one advancing from the north-east through Champagne ; the other from Guyenne, across the Loire. Condé himself commanded in the south ; but of his officers, many of the best and most trusted were scattered far and wide, levying troops,

¹ Duc d'Aumale, *Histoire des Princes de Condé*.

and preparing to defend fortresses. With the Prince in Guyenne were La Rochefoucauld, the young Duc de Richelieu, and La Trémouille, Prince de Tarente, the eldest son of that house. No one man could hope to fill the void left by Turenne; but some consolation was at hand in the shape of a message from Marsin, who, at the head of four regiments from his Catalonian army, was hastening to join the Prince. "Le bon-homme Marsin will be of some use", Condé wrote to Gramont; "and his troops, though not strong in numbers, will give substance to the recruits. I know this news will not please you, as you have always wished me to be reconciled to the Court; still, you cannot be sorry to know that I am in a condition to prevent myself from being entirely overwhelmed".¹ Aymar de Choupes was another hardened warrior; but, with few exceptions, the officers of the Prince's army were chosen, perforce, for political rather than for military reasons. The rank of the Duc de Nemours demanded an important post, and Condé, after some hesitation, decided to give him the command of the northern forces; Tavannes, whom he was to supersede, would act as his Lieutenant-General, and must keep him as far as possible from any fatal blunders. Nemours had shown himself to have no lack of courage in war; but as a substitute for Turenne he was nothing less than ludicrously inadequate. The initial difficulty of conveying him from Guyenne to Flanders proved almost insurmountable; the Royal troops were occupying posts throughout all the centre of France, and it was impossible for any well-known rebel leader to make the journey without great risk of being waylaid and taken prisoner; while Nemours, fragile in health, capricious and uncontrolled in temper, was wholly unfitted for the hardships of such an undertaking. It was agreed that the safest method of travelling was by sea, and he therefore set out from Bordeaux, with Chavagnac and a small band of followers; but a tempest, which arose a few hours later, drove the ship aground among reeds and mud, some thirty miles farther along the coast. Nemours, who had been brought on shore half-dead from sea-sickness, declared that "not for a thousand kingdoms would he set foot again on board any ship"; and that, come what might, the rest of the

¹ A.C., October, 1651.

journey must be made by land. Chavagnac procured horses, and took the precaution of disguising the Duke as a valet before they proceeded on their way. They reached the frontier at last in safety, but not without many narrow escapes ; one in particular is recorded when, at a stopping-place on the road, Nemours, regardless of his disguise, risked the discovery of the whole party by persistently demanding, ' d'un ton de prince ', a certain ' sirop de cerises ' on which he had set his heart. Chavagnac finally left him at Soissons, and returned, thankfully, to the army of Guyenne, whence good officers could ill be spared.

The Prince had travelled from Montrond to Bordeaux, where the citizens received him joyfully as their new Governor, the supplanter of Épernon. Elsewhere his cause did not prosper ; for the King, pursuing the course of action which had met with such success a year earlier, made a progress to Bourges. The effect was instantaneous ; at the first summons the Governor threw off his allegiance to Condé, and Louis entered the town amidst acclamations of delight. Turenne was preparing to guard Paris. Condé's opponent in Guyenne was none other than the Comte d'Harcourt—' l'homme gros et court ', as the Prince still calls him in private correspondence—whose seasoned troops, opposed to the raw recruits of the rebel army, were soon to avenge their leader for such insults. Not all Condé's individual skill and energy could supply the lack of training, both in officers and men ; or that of pay-money for retaining their services ; and though he avoided defeat in the field, one minor reverse followed another, with little or no intermission. Harcourt did not press his advantages ; had he been a general of the type of Turenne, the Prince's army could scarcely have escaped utter destruction. As matters stood, Condé after some three months of warfare, could not blind himself to the fact that his cause was losing ground on all sides. Saint-Luc, Governor of Languedoc, was levying forces to support Harcourt ; the Prince had scarcely one General Officer on whose capacity he could rely ; and at Bordeaux, his chief stronghold, his followers were mainly engaged in quarrelling among themselves.

His situation would have been desperate but for an event which, while seemingly a triumph for his

arch-enemy, turned a wave of popular feeling once more against the Court. Mazarin was returning to France. The Queen had almost welcomed civil war, as affording opportunities for his recall; and now, with her formal sanction, he set out to meet the Court at Poitiers, escorted by a force of seven thousand men, raised at his own expense on the German frontier, to place at the King's disposal. In Paris, the news of the Cardinal's journey was received with wrath and dismay. Monsieur so far forgot his indecision as to order forces to be levied in his domains, and to form them, with his household troops, into an army, whose command he bestowed on Beaufort; and, at the same time, he wrote to Condé, definitely suggesting terms of alliance. The Parliament, who had lately registered the King's decree, proclaiming the Prince a traitor, now put forth another, on their own authority, setting a price on the Cardinal's head, Condé lost no time in seizing his advantage; he was even alleged, in some quarters, to have foreseen the result of Mazarin's return, and to have sent messages to the Queen, secretly giving his consent; but in the existing maze of intrigue, such accusations were freely made without proof. There is no doubt that he dispatched a letter to the Parliament, offering his services against the Sicilian invader; nor that a treaty of alliance between him and Monsieur was signed on January 24th (1652). The rebel reverses in the south were not over; but the expectation of support in Paris opened new possibilities before Condé, and saved him from despair.

In February, Harcourt was encamped on the northern bank of the Garonne, while Condé, leaving Marsin to check the enemy's advance, marched to join Conti at Astaffort, near Agen. Saint-Luc, coming up from Languedoc, had reached Miradoux, a small town some miles south of the Garonne. Here the Prince met him, and a sharp engagement took place; Condé had a horse killed under him; six squadrons of Saint-Luc's cavalry were routed and the remainder of his force took refuge, some at Lectoure, some within the walls of Miradoux. Condé's years of victory had given him a self-confidence which could not always be justified; he invested the town, and refused terms to Saint-Luc's soldiers within it, believing that they

would be forced to yield themselves prisoners of war. He should have known better what to expect of the regiment which, under his own orders, had opened the trenches at Lerida to the sound of violins. The officer in command, summoned to surrender, merely returned the celebrated answer, " Je suis du regiment de Champagne ", and forthwith organised a stubborn defence. Marsin failed to check Harcourt's march to the relief, and the rapid advance of the Royalists forced Condé, much against his will, to raise the siege. Chouppes, who was manifestly jealous of Marsin, attributed his failure to disregard of the Prince's orders, and accused him to his face, when, retreating before Harcourt, the Count rejoined the main army. There were high words between them, till Condé intervened: " Gentlemen, this is my affair. If I had one more regiment with me, I would not stir; but there is no help for it; we must go".¹ This retreat from Miradoux was the most humiliating experience of the campaign. Condé's scouts, like the greater part of his army, were untrained; and Harcourt had come within three miles of him before the alarm was given. Fortunately for the rebel force, the Royalists lost some hours in taking possession of a small fortress by the way, and thus Condé was able to hurry his troops, in great disorder, to Agen. Even here he found a hostile population, prepared to close their gates against him; and admission was not granted till he had appeared almost as a suppliant before the authorities.

Once within the walls, he summoned La Rochefoucauld and Marsin, and announced to them a new resolve; namely, to give up the struggle in the south, and, leaving his troops at Bordeaux, to make his way to join the allied troops who were marching on the Loire. Nemours and Beaufort had joined forces, and were now at the head of twelve thousand men; but since neither had the gifts of a commander, and since, despite their relationship, they could never meet without quarrelling, the need of some supreme authority was imperative. Chavigny, with others of the Prince's adherents, had written in pressing terms, urging him to come northwards and assume the command; with him as a leader, the ' army of the Princes ' would hold its own against the forces of both King and Cardinal.

¹ Chouppes, *Mémoires*.

Fouquet de Croissy, writing from Paris, puts forward an irresistible appeal; showing, incidentally, that the title by which M. le Prince is known to posterity was first bestowed in his lifetime: "We have so often sent word of the need for Your Highness's presence here, that, without repeating any further reasons, I will content myself by saying that, since the troops of M. de Nemours crossed the frontier, you are wished for by all the citizens, who never cease asking for their Great Condé".¹ The Prince, disgusted with his position at Agen, and realising its hopelessness, asked nothing better than to set out. The journey was to be made by land; only a part of it, in any case, could have been made by sea; but the danger of capture, which had threatened Nemours, was increased tenfold in the case of M. le Prince, who was a more conspicuous personality in every way, and would be a far more valuable prisoner. Marsin and La Rochefoucauld both begged to accompany him, but only La Rochefoucauld gained permission; Marsin, more to be relied on in military matters, was left to guard Bordeaux, under the nominal orders of Conti. The Prince next sent for Chavagnac, and told him that he must be their guide, since he had made a like journey with Nemours. Chavagnac demurred; "it would be too great a risk for His Highness, who was well known throughout all the kingdom". Condé answered: "I have no wish to play the Gascon (*i.e.* to boast) although we are in Gascony; still, you have seen me in danger often enough to know that I am not afraid of being shot, or hanged. You need think of no more objections; my mind is made up". He might have added that he feared imprisonment more than death; but that he would brave even that danger sooner than refuse the opportunity that offered. Thus silenced, Chavagnac lost not an instant in making preparations; and a few days later, Condé set forth from Agen to supersede Nemours, and to measure himself against Turenne.

¹ * *Affaires Etrangères*, Paris.

CHAPTER XVI

BLÉNEAU

1652

IT was on March 24th (Palm Sunday) that Condé rode out of Agen with his small band of followers. The party, fully mustered, numbered nine persons besides the Prince; namely, La Rochefoucauld; his son, the Prince de Marcillac, a boy of fifteen; Guitaut; Chavagnac; Bercenay and Saint-Hippolyte, officers in La Rochefoucauld's household; the Marquis de Lévis, a Gascon nobleman; Rochefort, Condé's valet; and Gourville. Lévis held a passport from Harcourt, which he had secured on the pretext of withdrawing himself and his household into Auvergne, and which was to serve him and his companions at every place where they were challenged. They left Agen without pomp, but without concealment, at midday; giving out that M. le Prince was summoned to Bordeaux by affairs of State. Outside the gates they were met by a guide, who brought with him four muskets, hidden in a bundle of straw. Condé, La Rochefoucauld, Bercenay, and Gourville each took one; the Prince passed his to Rochefort, who carried it for him. Marcillac went unarmed; for it was rightly supposed that the fatigue of the journey would be as much as he could bear, and that he ought to carry no extra weight. For some miles they followed the road to Bordeaux, in order to avoid suspicion; but at the ford of Drot they crossed the Garonne, and began the journey in earnest. Their way lay almost due north, for a distance of some three hundred miles, to where Nemours and Beaufort were concentrating their forces on the Loire; Nemours' headquarters were at Lorris, eight or nine miles from the river's right bank, between Gien and Orleans. Condé's original plan of campaign had perforce undergone alteration. The Loire country

was now the chief seat of operations ; the Court had left Poitiers, and was moving eastwards from Saumur, protected by a powerful army under Turenne. A decisive victory, at this point, would enable the Princes to seize ' la personne du Roi ', dispose of Mazarin at their will, and march unchecked upon Paris ; but so long as Nemours and Beaufort were occupied with their private quarrels, and hindered by contradictory orders from Monsieur in Paris, and from Condé in Guyenne, the Royalists had little or nothing to fear.

On the day that they left Agen the travellers covered a distance of thirty-five miles without encountering danger. The leaders of the party had each assumed a name, by which to be entered on the passport ; La Rochefoucauld was ' Beaupré ' ; Chavagnac, ' St. Amand ' ; and Condé, ' La Motheville '. Beyond this precaution, and that of being equipped ' en cavalier ', rather than ' en seigneur ', there was little attempt made at any personal disguise. No efforts would have concealed the identity of M. le Prince from anyone who had seen him before ; his face, his figure, even the air with which he carried his head, were all alike characteristic ; his chance of safety lay, not in any elaborate masquerade, but in spending as few days as possible on the road, and in avoiding all populous places. Monday morning found the party on the outskirts of Cahusac, where Gourville left his companions hidden in a barn, while he went in search of provisions. He was recognised, and accosted, in the town, but managed to elude suspicion, and returned with a supply of bread, wine, eggs, walnuts, and cheese. All that day they travelled without ceasing, and it was not till late at night that they halted at a wayside inn, where the hostess, who had scarcely any food in the house except eggs, undertook to make omelets enough for them all. Condé watched her as she set to work, and was so fascinated by the process that he insisted on making the next omelet himself. All went well till the critical moment came for turning it ; when, with a confident but unskilled hand, he tossed it upwards, and it fell, not into the pan, but into the heart of the fire, to the dismay of the hungry spectators. Gourville begged the hostess " to entrust no more of their supper to this accomplished cook ".¹

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

Before daylight they were once more on the road. The Prince, as usual in times of strong excitement, seemed indefatigable ; while the journey lasted, not one of his followers made so little of its hardships. More than once he was within an ace of detection ; on the fourth day of his travels, as they rode through a village, a peasant came up to him and saluted him by name. Condé laughed, and the rest of the company began to joke over the supposed likeness, till the bewildered countryman thought that his eyes must have deceived him.¹ Towards evening, on that day, it became evident, in the first place, that fresh horses must be found without delay ; and, in the second place, that some members of the party could travel no farther without a full night's rest. Marcillac had suffered most from fatigue ; when the order was given to remount, after a halt at midday, he was found to be almost unconscious, and had to be revived with cold water before he could be lifted to the saddle. La Rochefoucauld had developed an attack of gout, and could not wear a boot ; Gourville, with some pride in his own ingenuity, describes a kind of cloth gaiter which he improvised for his relief. It was decreed, accordingly, that Wednesday night should be spent at a small country house, held by a retainer of Lévis ; " and here ", so it is recorded, " these gentlemen slept between sheets for the first time since starting ".² Chavagnac had meanwhile been deputed to buy horses, and applied to a friend of his own in the neighbourhood, who furnished them willingly, and even refused payment, when he heard that one was destined for M. le Prince. The story of the transaction might be taken from some Border ballad ; for this same horse, on inspection, was immediately recognised as one that had mysteriously disappeared, not long since, from La Rochefoucauld's stable. A new peril threatened before the end of the evening. Lévis had not disclosed the true characters of his supposed household ; and their host, a plain country gentleman, knew his own feudal lord, but had never till now set eyes on the Prince. He was so far from suspecting ' La Motheville ' of being other than an ordinary member of the Marquis's train, that he repeated, at supper, certain highly-coloured anecdotes of the House of Condé, and especially of Madame de Longueville, which had reached

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

² Gourville.

even that remote district. His guests listened, dismayed but helpless. Condé was on the verge of losing all self-control ; he turned first red, and then white ; at last he began to fidget nervously, and his followers expected each moment to see him fall on the speaker with blows. By desperate efforts they contrived to change the subject, just in time ; and the Prince, recollecting himself, laughed with the rest.¹

Thursday brought no special adventure, except to Marcillac, who lost control of his horse, and was nearly drowned, in crossing a stream. Late in the afternoon of Friday, the whole party, tired and travel-stained, found themselves at Le Bec d'Allier, on the left bank of the Loire, just below the junction of the Loire and the Allier. They were now not more than two days' journey from Nemours' camp ; but their position had never been more dangerous, for both divisions of the King's army were on the march, between them and their allies ; the first commanded by Turenne, the second by the Marquis d'Hocquincourt. The six days that Condé had spent on the road from Agen, had been no less full of incident in other quarters. The King, with all his Court, had left Saumur early in March, on a progress along the Loire. He had visited Tours, Azay, Amboise, and Blois, and had assured himself of the citizens' loyalty. At Blois, the first check awaited him ; news came that Orleans, chief of the Loire towns, had been seized for the Princes, and that its gates were closed to the Royal troops. The taking of Orleans was the first feat of arms of 'la Grande Mademoiselle'. Monsieur, urged by his supporters to go in person and secure the town, whose citizens looked on him as their liege lord, had declined to stir from Paris ; but, half in joke, he gave consent to a request that his daughter might take his place. Mademoiselle was both able and willing ; she set forth light-heartedly, with two or three of her ladies, in her coach, attended by a cavalry escort. On March 27th, she presented herself before the gates of Orleans and demanded admittance, which was refused by the Governor, on the pretext of his duty to the King. Nothing daunted, she pursued her way on foot under the walls of the town, signalling to the inhabitants, who watched her from the ramparts, and whose sympathies were entirely with her. She came, at length,

¹ La Rochefoucauld ; Guy Joly ; Chavagnac, *Mémoires*.

to the river's bank, where the walls were washed by the Loire ; and here a deputation of boatmen met her, offering to make a bridge of boats, and to force an entrance for her through a small door opening on to a wharf, which she might reach by a ladder from one of the boats. The suggestion was eagerly accepted, and promptly carried out. The Princess, followed by two terrified ladies-in-waiting, crossed the improvised bridge, mounted the ladder, and with a good deal of assistance, from within and without, was pushed and pulled through the door into the town. From that moment her triumph was assured. The citizens conveyed her, laughing and dishevelled, to the Hôtel de Ville, where she at once assumed complete command of the situation ; her own perfect confidence in the supremacy given by her rank, was more effectual than diplomacy or persuasion could have been. The Governor received her directions meekly, and it was agreed that the gates of Orleans should be closed against all troops save those of the Princes and their allies.

This momentous decision was arrived at on March 28th. On the same day, as though to compensate the Royalists for their loss, Turenne had been successful in a brisk skirmish with a detachment of Beaufort's troops under the veteran Sirot, at the bridge of Jargeau. Sirot had fallen, mortally wounded, and was carried by his soldiers to die at Orleans. Turenne, on the day after the fight, escorted the King to Gien, where the Court, bereft of Orleans, was to fix its abode ; on April 4th he took up his new quarters at Briare, while Hocquincourt established himself at Bléneau, on the Loing. But already a fresh alarm had reached both Court and camp. M. le Prince was no longer opposing Harcourt in Guyenne. No one could speak with certainty of his movements ; but there were rumours that he had been recognised on the road between La Charité and Cosne. Scouting-parties had been instantly dispatched southwards ; and the utmost vigilance was ordered on all hands.

Condé and his followers crossed the Loire at Le Bec d'Allier on March 29th ; no easy task, since it was known that fords and bridges were strictly watched. Lévis secured a ferry-boat, but much delay was caused by the horses ; they could only make the passage swimming, tethered to the stern ; and one, becoming restive, so nearly upset the boat that the halter had to

be cut, and the animal left to its fate. The travellers had no rest that night. Lévis, whose passport had served its turn, bade farewell to the Prince at this point, and turned back to Auvergne. The rest took the road to La Charité, intending to pass by the outskirts of the town ; but the guide to whom they trusted mistook his way, after dark, and led them up to the gates. La Charité was a place especially to be avoided, for the Governor was none other than Bussy-Rabutin, who had never forgiven Guitaut's promotion, and had thrown in his lot with the Court as soon as war was declared. Fortunately, as it happened, Bussy was just then absent from his post ; but Condé, not knowing this, and seeing his companions' anxiety, pretended, out of sheer malice, to seek an interview. " Tell M. de Bussy ", he called to the guard who challenged them, " that La Motheville begs him to come and open the gates ! " Gourville, hastily interposing, gave out that they were King's officers on their way to join the Court : " You may spend the night here, if you please ", he added, addressing the Prince in very audible tones ; " but for the rest of us, whose leave is up to-morrow, there is no time to spare ". " Well, you are queer fellows ", answered Condé, still in hearing of the guard, " but I suppose we had better go on together. My compliments to M. le Gouverneur ! " With that, they turned away from the gates, and set out along the road to Cosne ; all but Gourville, who, by a previous arrangement, took the direct road to Paris, bearing dispatches for Monsieur.

M. le Prince was not easy to deal with in this last stage of his journey. Excitement and determination had sustained him marvellously, but the tension was becoming unbearable, and he grew reckless. He would not turn aside to avoid the town of Cosne : " It will be amusing, some day, to tell how I came by the high road, like a courier ", was his only answer to the suggestion. The result was precisely what might have been expected. They had scarcely left the town when two horsemen were observed coming towards them ; Condé's followers gathered round him and screened him from view, but Chavagnac, on the outskirts of the group, saw clearly that both he and Guitaut had been recognised. " We must kill those men ", he said. Guitaut protested, maintaining that they could not

have known him, and this more than humane advice prevailed ; partly, no doubt, on account of the loss of time that a fight would have involved. Chavagnac, however, was not mistaken ; the two horsemen were messengers from the Court. They not only identified Guitaut, but presently waylaid Rochefort, the valet, who had overslept himself by the way, and was hurrying to join his master. Rochefort, with a pistol at his head, confessed that M. le Prince was indeed one of the company. The messengers departed to report the alarm at headquarters ; but, in their haste, they neglected the guarding of their prisoner, and Rochefort escaped to overtake the Prince, and to tell him of his danger. Such a warning forced even Condé, sorely against his will, to leave the highway for a longer and safer route. It was said that he vented his anger upon Guitaut, who had spared their enemies ; that, as the Count held his stirrup, he kicked him, and " wished that he might see his head on a scaffold ". Those who waited on Princes, in those days, were used to such treatment ; Guitaut's allegiance was unshaken, and his favour only eclipsed for an hour.

Suspicion was now so thoroughly aroused, that Condé dared not make too searching inquiries as to Nemours' movements. Any peasant or wayfarer whom he questioned might be in Mazarin's pay. Failing precise information, he decided to continue his way direct to Châtillon-sur-Loing, the principal seat of the Coligny family, now in the possession of the Duchess Isabelle. Here he would be sure of welcome, even though the Duchess was not herself in residence ; and Nemours, from all accounts, could not be far distant. One of the party was therefore dispatched with a message to the lodge-keepers, asking that the gates of the walled park and vineyards, which surrounded the castle, might be left unlocked till their arrival. Half-way between Cosne and Châtillon, on April 1st, Guitaut and Chavagnac went in search of food and a last relay of horses. Condé, La Rochefoucauld, and Marcillac were to await them on a side road ; but Royalist soldiers were scouring the whole neighbourhood, and various alarms scattered the party so effectually, that they only met again within the walls of Châtillon. Chavagnac, the first to arrive, went out to search for the Prince, and, coming suddenly upon him among the vineyards, nearly lost his life ;

for Condé, not recognising him at a distance, took aim with his musket, and threatened to fire if the supposed enemy came a step nearer. He was undeceived, at length, and came safely to the castle ; but not an hour too soon. The gates had scarcely closed behind him when Sainte-Maure, a King's officer, appeared at the head of thirty horsemen, and was refused admittance ; on the ground that, by the Duchess's orders, no soldiers of either the King's or the Princes' army were to trespass on her domain.

Condé learnt, at Châtillon, that Nemours' and Beaufort's forces were not more than twenty miles away ; and forthwith determined to make the journey that night. Had he followed the route he intended, he must have fallen into a trap ; for Sainte-Maure, repulsed from the castle gates, was lying in ambush between Châtillon and Lorris. But, by a fortunate accident, the Prince and his companions missed their way in the darkness ; all night they strayed among lanes and fields, and the enemy awaited them in vain. Sainte-Maure, either fearing to lose himself, or—as it was afterwards reported—not over-anxious to capture M. le Prince in person, made no search. Towards morning the little company, much exhausted, were nearing Lorris, when, at a turn of the road, a cavalry patrol was sighted, so near that flight was already impossible. No course remained but to ride forward and challenge boldly ; the light was still dim, and they might chance to escape recognition : ' Qui vive ? ' cried Condé, as they came within hail. The answer was a shout of joy : " Vive vous-même, Monseigneur ! " for the patrol was from his own regiment of ' Condé-cavalerie ', now serving with Nemours.¹ M. le Prince was conducted in triumph to the camp of Lorris, not a mile away, and was there received with unspeakable relief and astonishment by all ranks of the army. Nemours showed no jealousy ; he was thankful to be spared a task for which he had neither the energy nor the experience, and no one was more ready than he to welcome the Prince. Beaufort, who exercised a separate command, as Monsieur's General, and Clinchamp, in charge of the Spanish contingent, both yielded to the same unquestioned authority. Mademoiselle, waiting at Orleans for her father's orders, heard rumours of

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

Condé's arrival, and, as she says, "thought the news could not be true, it was so much in accordance with her wishes". She was convinced by Guitaut, who brought a letter from the Prince, full of ardent protestations of gratitude, and compliments on her late valiant exploit. 'C'est un coup qui n'appartient qu'à vous', he assured her; the letter is proudly transcribed, word for word, in her Memoirs.

Condé gave himself and his followers scarcely a day to recover from the fatigues of their journey. Hitherto all operations had been delayed while Nemours and



Beaufort quarrelled publicly, and even came to blows, over the question whether their next advance should be on Blois or on Montargis. M. le Prince had not been twelve hours in camp before it was decided that Montargis must at once be secured as a base of supplies. The army marched to the attack on the following day (April 3rd). The Prince, arriving before the gates, took out his watch, made a note of the exact time, and sent word to the authorities that if the town had not surrendered within an hour, he proposed to carry it by assault. The Governor yielded promptly to this

threat, and it was said ever afterwards, that " M. le Prince had taken Montargis with his watch ".¹ Early on April 6th, Condé marched to Château-Renard, a fortified town about twenty miles north of Bléneau. The total strength of the ' army of the Princes ', including Beaufort's and Clinchamp's forces, was estimated at close on fifteen thousand men. The Royalist army numbered between twelve and thirteen thousand ; and in addition to this numerical disadvantage, ten miles of rough country separated Turenne, at Briare, from Hocquincourt, whose troops were disposed in the space between Bléneau, Breteau, and Rogny. The season was still so early that forage was scarce, and it would have been impossible for the whole army to camp together for any length of time.²

Up to April 7th, neither Turenne nor Hocquincourt had any suspicion that Condé was actually at the head of the rebel troops. The news of his sudden appearance on the road from La Charité had been succeeded by the rumour that he had turned aside, on finding himself recognised, and was on his way to levy forces in Burgundy. Hocquincourt believed firmly that he had to deal only with such Generals as Nemours and Beaufort. He disregarded Turenne's advice, and left the camp at Bléneau inadequately guarded, trusting for protection to the watercourses that enclosed it on two sides of a triangle ; the river Loing, and the canal of Briare. To the south, this triangle was almost completed by the Trézée, a small tributary of the Loire. Turenne, finding him proof against warnings,³ suggested to him to fall back upon Briare, that they might join forces for the moment, and to this scheme Hocquincourt consented ; but too late. He had agreed to leave Bléneau on April 7th ; and on the 6th, Condé, arriving at Château-Renard, was told of this intention by a countryman who had been acting as spy. In an instant the Prince had taken his resolve. He would attack Hocquincourt, and cut him off from Turenne, within the next twelve hours ; then, turning westwards, he would be free to deal separately with his great adversary at Briare. No one acknowledged more sincerely than

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² " Il n'y avoit pas moyen de subsister ensemble a cause du fourrage " (Turenne, *Mémoires*).

³ MS. Memoirs of Frémond d'Ablancourt, quoted by Ramsay.

Condé the genius of Turenne ; even at this crisis, the political importance of the coming struggle was not more present with him than the professional excitement of measuring himself against such an enemy. And if Condé set full value on Turenne's boundless forethought and resourcefulness, Turenne, on his side, appreciated no less the inspired qualities of M. le Prince in action ; the incomparable ' *fierté dans le combat* ' of which St. Évremond speaks.¹ The events of April 6th and 7th, foreshadow, in brief, Turenne's tactics throughout the six years of warfare that began at Bléneau, and ended on Dunkirk dunes. No man could fight like M. le Prince ; therefore, Turenne reasoned, his enemies' first general principle must be to give him no opportunity of fighting.

The attack on Hocquincourt's lines was to be made at night, and the first point to be gained was Rogny, a small town on a height, overlooking the junction of the canal of Briare with the Loing. Rogny was occupied by a detachment of German mercenaries on outpost duty under a French officer, La Lautière. The Prince, riding with the cavalry of his advance guard, sent Chavagnac to parley at the gates, and to represent their force as being on the way to join Turenne. Meanwhile, Nemours forded the river, and the dragoons found their post surrounded, before they had realised the fact of the enemy's presence ; La Lautière surrendered, after so little resistance that he was accused, though not positively convicted, of an understanding with the Princes' party. Once across the river, Condé's leading squadrons, guided by the light of camp fires, fell on the Royalist quarters like the wolf on the fold. Four encampments were surprised and scattered, in rapid succession ; the men who escaped fled into the surrounding woods, but numbers were killed, and many more taken prisoners. In the darkness and confusion, the officers of the attacking force found it hard to maintain order ; their troops burnt and pillaged freely, and were much dispersed when Condé, crossing the river Trézée, reached Breteau, where he found the enemy's baggage left at his mercy. Some of his chief officers had small experience of discipline, and were more bent on keeping near their leader than on controlling their forces. Nemours, Beaufort, La Rochefoucauld, Tavannes, Guitaut, and young Marcillac

¹ Parallèle entre M. le Prince et le Vicomte de Turenne.

were among those who followed him closely. This elect company, heading the squadrons of 'Meille' and 'Persan', had not long reached Breteau, when they learnt that the Royalists were assembling to make a stand on the right bank of the Trézée. Hocquincourt's headquarters were on this bank, less than a mile away; roused by the noise of the attack, he called up the squadrons nearest at hand, and placed himself at their head; at the same time sending orders to the infantry nearer Bléneau to come up as quickly as possible. There was no moon, but he marched, as nearly as could be judged, in the direction of the firing. Eight hundred horsemen were all that he had mustered; and he hesitated, at first, to engage what he supposed to be the whole army of the Princes. Drawing up his men on the outskirts of the villages, he awaited any sign or sound which might give him a clue to his enemy's strength. He was not long left in doubt; for Condé, knowing him at hand, faced about, and recrossed the Trézée to meet him. The passage of the stream would have been a hard task, even by day; the banks were high and steep, and the only bridge insecure and very narrow. Certain young officers, impatient of the delay, gave a reckless order for the firing of a thatched cottage on the bank, that they might have light to go forward; the roof blazed fiercely, and illuminated the whole scene, throwing the principal figures into strong relief. Hocquincourt, from his post, could observe each man, as the troops crossed the bridge in single file; he saw, with amazement, that M. le Prince had appeared, as if by a miracle, to take command; but he also judged rightly that Condé's strength at that moment was greatly inferior to his own. The Prince, with the group of officers who attended him, was already on the right bank, and the horsemen of 'Meille' and 'Persan' had followed, when Hocquincourt advanced to the attack, along an open way, wide enough for a squadron in order of battle. Condé heard, rather than saw, the enemy's approach; he formed his squadrons, and led them in person. The two forces clashed together in the darkness; Condé, heavily outnumbered, was at first repulsed, and his cavalry retreated some hundred yards in disorder. Nemours, wounded by a pistol-shot, was withdrawn from the fight by some of his

own followers. But all the while, the Princes' troops had been reassembling, and the single file of horsemen had never ceased its slow and steady progress across the Trézée. Condé rallied his men, by dint of great efforts; then leaving Beaufort to renew the attack in front, he placed himself at the head of a fresh squadron, newly arrived on the right bank and attacked at the same time in flank. "M. le Prince", says Tavannes, who rode by his side, "charged three times, with that vigour which was so natural to him"; and at the third onslaught the Royalists broke their ranks and fled; some towards Bléneau, some towards Auxerre. Their infantry, advancing to the scene of action, met with the fugitives, and, hearing of the defeat, retreated to safety within the walls of Bléneau.

It was not till two hours later, at dawn, that the Prince's army could realise how completely the Royalists had abandoned the field. Chavagnac, ordered in pursuit, had followed the enemy for some miles towards Auxerre, but the darkness prevented him from pressing them closely. Condé was tempted, at first, to dispose entirely of Hocquincourt's force, by attacking the infantry in Bléneau; they were old regiments, he said, and might give trouble if they were left in their present position. Tavannes was told off with a detachment, for the purpose; but the order had scarcely been issued, when all minor operations were cut short by the news that Turenne was marching from Briare, and had been sighted between Ouzouer and Breteau. The Prince gathered his forces, and prepared for action. His infantry had come up, after marching all night from Montargis. Some of his cavalry were still dispersed in the pursuit across country; and all were more or less tired by the night's work. Still, his numbers more than doubled those of Turenne, and he retraced his steps towards Breteau with high hopes of success; tempered only by the certainty that the Marshal was not lightly to be taken at a disadvantage.

Turenne had visited Hocquincourt at Bléneau, and, though seldom given to interference, had suggested that the camp might be considered open to attack. This interview took place on April 6th, and on the same day Turenne returned to Briare. That evening a scouting-party brought word that the

enemy's advance-guard was marching on Bléneau ; Condé's arrival had not been discovered, and their leader was supposed to be Nemours. Turenne set forth immediately, at the head of his infantry, to support Hocquincourt ; sending word to Navailles, his Lieutenant-General, to bring up the cavalry to join him, from their quarters in two or three neighbouring villages. As he rode through the darkness towards Breteau a red glare lit up the sky above Hocquincourt's camp, and a distant sound of musketry was heard. Turenne was ever a man of few words. He knew Condé ; he knew Nemours ; and he saw that the attack had been directed with unerring judgment both as to time and place. Therefore, wasting no breath in expressions of surprise, he pointed to where the light glowed, and stated, in tones of absolute conviction : " M. le Prince has come ! " Yet this fact caused him, by his own admission, greater and more complicated anxiety than he had ever known. When he spoke afterwards of the experience, his natural reserve for once gave way, and he described his feelings with perfect frankness and simplicity. " Never," he said, " were so many dreadful possibilities presented to the mind of one man. I had only lately been reconciled to the Court, and been given command of the force on which its safety depended. All such promotion gives rise to envy and enmity ; and I had enemies who accused me perpetually of being still in league with M. le Prince. The Cardinal had not, so far, believed them ; but he might have done so, if I had met with any disaster. Moreover, I knew that M. d'Hocquincourt would assuredly say that I had exposed him to attack, and then failed to support him. Such thoughts, in themselves, were sufficiently distressing ; but worse than all was the certainty that M. le Prince was approaching with a superior force, and with all the confidence given by his late success." ¹

The consciousness of accusations unjustly levelled against him, helped to influence the Marshal's decision. His officers urged him to give up all idea of meeting the Prince, and to retreat upon Gien ; but he knew too well what interpretation would be put upon such a course, and only sheer desperation would have driven him to it. There must be no question of a pitched

¹ St. Évremond, *Éloge de M. de Turenne*.

battle; all that could be attempted was to bar the way against Condé's triumphant advance upon Gien, and to this end Turenne's whole energy was directed. He rode forward 'fortement occupé en lui-même', to quote the Chevalier Ramsay; answering no one, but giving orders, from time to time, for the execution of his plan of action. The country between Briare and Bléneau was not new to him; he had traversed the distance twice within the past twenty-four hours, and had taken note of the position he now meant to occupy. To gain it, he was obliged to pursue his march perilously near the Prince's army; but the darkness favoured him, and by sunrise his design was, so far, accomplished. His troops had reached a large tract of open ground about a mile south of Breteau; before them there stretched, on the right hand, a wood, and on the left, a sheet of water surrounded by bogs. The only approach left open, from the front, was by the narrow road, or defile, which separated the wood from the marsh. A battery of eight guns, posted on rising ground, and masked by trees and bushes, commanded this defile; while the main body of cavalry, under Navailles, was ready to attack the enemy emerging from it in flank. The infantry battalions were stationed, some on the outskirts of the wood, some in the clearings within it. At daybreak, Turenne, uncertain of the enemy's exact movements, advanced at the head of six squadrons through the defile and was met by the sight of Condé's approaching force, little more than a mile away. Fearing to become involved in a general action, the Marshal hastily repassed the defile, and held his troops in readiness at some distance behind the wood, but not far enough to leave space for the Prince to deploy his forces in the plain.

This manœuvre was duly noted by Condé; who, marching from Bléneau, had happened to be reconnoitring just as the Royalist squadrons reached the farthest point of their advance. He burned with impatience as he saw them exposed to attack at the mouth of the defile. "If M. de Turenne stays where he is", he said to Tavannes, "I shall cut him to pieces. But he knows better than to stay".¹ Even as he spoke the Royalists were seen to withdraw into the defile; while their infantry retreated from the wood, to rejoin the troops

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

drawn up in the plain. Condé advanced to the near edge of the wood, and there halted, baffled by the impossibility of deploying his force. After a brief delay, Turenne determined on a fresh manœuvre ; partly in the fear that the Prince might have found scope for a turning movement ; partly in the hope of inflicting some definite loss, by enticing him into the defile. Navailles' cavalry was ordered to fall back, as though beginning a general retreat. Turenne had not counted in vain on Condé's dread of an enemy escaping him. The Prince awaited no further development ; the sight of the Royalist forces, apparently passing beyond his reach, was enough. In his haste to overtake them he, in turn, ordered his cavalry into the defile, which was now clear of troops. As the first squadrons emerged into the open, Navailles faced about, and advanced towards them at a brisk pace, though without charging ; and, at the same moment, the artillery opened fire with deadly effect. Condé, seeing his horsemen driven back in disorder through the defile, sent hurried orders to recall them, and to check the advance of the rest.

The situation had now resolved itself into a deadlock ; for the Prince hesitated to expose his troops to be mown down by the enemy's guns, before they could deploy on the plain. He knew little of the surrounding country, save that it was covered with wood and marsh ; and, since no guide was forthcoming, a turning movement must have occupied many hours, and given Turenne ample time to withdraw his forces. On the other hand, the Marshal was prevented from following up any advantage by the fear of provoking a general action. Neither army stirred ; but the Royalists maintained their fire, which, directed from a height, inflicted considerable damage. Condé's heavy artillery had been left, with the baggage, at Montargis, for greater convenience on the night march ; so that, in this respect, his strength was inferior to that of Turenne. To oppose the enemy's battery commanding the defile, he had only two light guns ; these were posted at the near end of the defile, and continued for some time in action, but without much appreciable result. All day passed in this unequal contest ; till, towards evening, the Royalists were reinforced by Hocquincourt, who had rallied the greater part of his force, and came up by a circuitous route. Bouillon also advanced from Gien, with every

man that could be spared from guarding the King's person. Still, Turenne persisted in his determination to avoid anything in the nature of a pitched battle; the consequences of defeat would have been too serious. At sunset both he and Hocquincourt withdrew towards Briare; their retreat covered by the artillery, and by a stretch of rising ground.

Condé, baulked of his victory, was left in possession of the field; in this case, a barren honour. His troops were in no condition to follow the retreating enemy; they were worn out with their past efforts, and much encumbered by the spoils of war; he himself—so his followers declared—had been thirty-six hours on horseback. As he advanced on to the plain he caught sight, in the distance, of Hocquincourt, whose cavalry was falling in to form a rear-guard. The Marquis was an old acquaintance; and Condé sent word that he would be glad to speak with him, and would promise him safe conduct. Hocquincourt came, willingly enough, and the meeting was of a most friendly character. The Prince laughed at him for his flight, and made amends by compliments;¹ saying, as they parted: "What a pity that honest men like us should be cutting each other's throats for the sake of a lackey like Mazarin!" Such, at least, was the popular version of the interview, and there is no reason to disbelieve it. It had not escaped Condé's notice that Hocquincourt complained freely, though without cause, of Turenne's treatment of him; and his subsequent defection from the Royal cause was probably no matter for surprise.

The Prince's army camped that night at La Brulerie, on the borders of the canal; and marched, next day, to Châtillon. Condé wrote a detailed account of the action at Bléneau to Mademoiselle, who was gratified beyond measure by the confidence with which he treated her. The frondeurs were loudly proclaiming a victory over 'les Mazarins', and were, in a sense, justified. M. le Prince had routed one half of the King's—or the Cardinal's—forces, and the other half had retreated before him. He had despoiled Hocquincourt's camp, and had taken over a thousand prisoners; all of whom, untroubled by personal politics, were at once enrolled in the rebel army. But, if success were to be measured by practical effects, the chief honours of

¹ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

the day undoubtedly lay with Turenne ; who, on his return to Gien (April 8th) was deservedly hailed as the protector of the Court. The Queen thanked him publicly for his services ; and, in a transport of relief, declared that ‘ his hand had crowned the King a second time ’. Condé himself helped to complete this impression, by a blunder so flagrant, and so little in accordance with his nature, as to suggest to his enemies a supernatural intervention on their behalf : *Quem Jupiter vult perdere, dementat prius*. Gourville, returning from his errand, brought letters from many who called themselves the Prince’s friends, and who now urged on him the necessity of his presence in Paris. Chavigny was perhaps the most insistent ; he represented forcibly the growing influence of Retz over Monsieur, and the general neglect of the interests of the House of Condé, in the absence of M. le Prince and of all members of his family. Condé, exhausted by six months’ arduous campaigning, and above all, by the desperate strain of the past fortnight, felt that politics might, for once, be more profitable than warfare ; and allowed himself to be convinced. Like most self-willed persons, he yielded—when he yielded at all—at the wrong time and in the wrong way. He left the army at twenty-four hours’ notice, apparently without consulting any of his more cautious advisers. One danger, at least, was averted, since Nemours and Beaufort were not left in command. Nemours, incapacitated by his wound, was at the castle of Châtillon, where he had been joined by his devoted and long-suffering wife, bringing with her a train of doctors from Paris. Beaufort had decided to accompany the Prince and La Rochefaucauld, who set out from Montargis on April 9th. Tavannes and Clinchamp were to replace Condé, to the best of their ability. Clinchamp was an experienced officer, but had never before held so important a command ; Tavannes had zeal and courage, with only moderate capacity ; neither was in the smallest degree fitted to cope with Turenne. Yet it was to them that the direction of the campaign, at such a critical moment, was entrusted ; while Condé, who alone of all his party might have won success in the field, flung himself once more into the ‘ abyss of negotiations ’ spoken of by La Rochefoucauld ; “ that abyss of which no one has ever yet sounded all the depths ”.

CHAPTER XVII

THE FAUBOURG ST. ANTOINE

1652 (*Continued*)

WHILE Turenne, at Gien, was the hero of the hour, Condé, in Paris, was still more loudly acclaimed. The inhabitants came out to meet him with music and every sign of rejoicing. Loret's untiring 'Historic Muse' depicts the scene :

" Avant d'y faire entrée
Son Altesse fut recontrée
Par des femmes portant lauriers
A cette fleur des grands guerriers,
Chacun courait de place en place,
Afin d'envisager sa face.
Le Mazarin fut fort frondé,
Et l'on cria, ' Vive Condé ! '

The enthusiasm was heightened when the Prince, on the day of his entry, drove through the streets scattering gold pieces among the crowd. No one knew better than he that Bléneau was, at the best, a qualified triumph ; but, fatigued as he was by his late exertions, and demoralised by his new rôle as a rebel, he was in a mood to be gratified by any form of public applause.

Paris, with the King beyond the walls, and Monsieur as the nominal head of affairs within them, had fallen into a state bordering on anarchy. Retz, in Condé's absence, was the strongest personality among the leaders of the Princes' party ; and he, as it happened, was opposed to peace, believing that dissensions would better serve his own ends. Monsieur was in his power, and seemed likely to remain so ; more especially as the Coadjutor's ecclesiastical position had lately undergone a change. His promotion, two months earlier, to the rank of Cardinal, had fulfilled a cherished ambition ; but, like some other ambitions, it was no sooner realised

than its disadvantages became apparent. As Cardinal, he must maintain some degree of dignity ; he could not, with any decency, go on foot through the streets, and mingle with seditious rioters. Deprived of this source of power, he resolved, at all costs, to keep his hold over Monsieur, and, using him as a tool, to play a prominent part in the negotiations which he foresaw between the Court and the Princes. He dreaded nothing so much as that an alliance between Condé and Monsieur should make both independent of his support ; and, by his own confession, he deliberately set himself to ' diminish the credit of M. le Prince ' by every means in his power. Condé's line of action gave ample opportunity to his enemies ; he took no steps to restore law and order, and he allowed notorious leaders of sedition to frequent his ante-rooms. Disturbances of every kind continued after his return, and were diligently attributed by Retz to his influence ; officials were attacked in the streets and denounced as ' Mazarins ' ; one public office was stormed and plundered. The rioters never failed to declare that they were acting at the instigation of the Princes ; Condé and Gaston as regularly denied the charge ; but, since they never attempted to prevent a repetition of the offence, their words carried no conviction. Retz, by his own account, privately believed Condé innocent of actually stirring up sedition ; but was none the less ready to make full use of any circumstance which was likely to tell against him. " Monsieur ", he says, " was timid, and feared the anger of the people if he repressed these brawlers too vigorously. M. le Prince, who feared nothing, did not consider the unfavourable effect produced by these riots in the minds of those who were alarmed by them ".¹ Nor was the Prince warned, as he might have been, by the tone of the innumerable pamphlets which were published against him within a few weeks of his arrival in Paris, and which showed plainly that his popularity had been no more lasting than on former occasions. Retz himself was the author of more than one such attack ; but while he records with pride that his pamphlet on Chavigny reduced its victim to tears of anger, he admits that the only feeling he could arouse in M. le Prince was one of amused interest. Marigny, the Prince's secretary, saw

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

him, one day, absorbed in *Le Vrai et le Faux du Prince de Condé et du Cardinal de Retz*, a composition in which the Cardinal had put forth all his powers ; and ventured to observe that " this must be some great work, since it gave His Highness so much entertainment ". " It does please me, indeed ", answered Condé. " I am learning all my faults, of which none of you have ever dared to tell me ".¹

The Prince, might, from long habit, succeed in turning a deaf ear to attacks on his private character ; but he could never find satisfaction in the thought of his own disloyalty to the King ; and any public allusion to it might always chance to touch a sensitive spot. When he presented himself in Parliament on April 12th, and again on the 23rd, he stood ashamed and silent before the Presidents Bailleul and Amelot, who upbraided him for receiving pay from Spain, for levying troops against the Crown, and for appearing in the Palais de Justice " when his hands were red with the blood of the King's subjects ". The majority of the counsellors were by no means friendly to Condé, although hatred of Mazarin withheld them from giving vent to their feelings, and caused some protest among them against Bailleul's utterance. The same feeling prompted general indignation when, towards the end of April, it became known that Rohan, Chavigny, and Goulas had been dispatched by the Princes to the Court on a mission of peace. " I believe it will come to nothing ", said Monsieur to Retz, who tried to restrain him, " but what would you have ? Everyone is treating about something, and I cannot be the only one left out ".² Against such an argument even Retz could not prevail, and the negotiations pursued their course, one intrigue within another. Communication was made easy by the removal of the Court to St. Germain ; a measure suggested by the King's advisers in the hope that his presence might bring the Parisians to a better mind. Turenne's army was encamped at Arpajon, fifteen miles south of Paris ; thus protecting the Court from Tavannes, who had taken up his quarters at Étampes.

Certain partisans of Condé have done their best to prove that he entered on these dealings in all good faith, and that he was sincerely anxious for peace. Inasmuch as he disliked the consciousness of being a rebel, this

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

² *Ibid.*

view may possibly be correct ; but it cannot be denied that his demands for himself, and for his friends, were exorbitant, or that he showed little readiness to meet his opponents half-way. Gourville, who was beyond question in a position to judge, declares that " one party had only to propose any condition, for the other to find objections to it " ;¹ and, even had the Prince's goodwill been far greater than it was, he would still have been held fast by his obligations to Spain. Retz was spared the humiliation of seeing an important transaction carried through without his help ; Chavigny and his companions returned, as Monsieur had prophesied, unsuccessful. The next embassy to St. Germain was of a less conventional kind. Madame de Châtillon had seized the occasion for a supreme assertion of her influence. Her wishes had, from the first, been on the side of conciliation ; in opposition to those of Madame de Longueville, who had steadily promoted war. Both in public and private life the two women had long been rivals ; and for a time Madame de Longueville was victorious. Condé had plunged into a civil war ; while Nemours—

"—ce grand Duc de Nemours,
D'une façon subtile,
D'un cœur rempli d'amour"—

had allowed himself to be won over to her and to her cause. But now, while the affairs of the party detained her at Bordeaux, her power waned ; Nemours' duty with the Princes' troops recalled him to Paris, where he fell, once more, under the charm that had enslaved him before. Not content with this private vengeance, the Duchess Isabelle pursued her triumph by establishing herself as the mediatrix between M. le Prince and the Court ; she was bent on outshining Madame de Longueville in political importance, and undertook the task with the utmost confidence. Her relations with Condé were a matter of common knowledge ; that he should admit her to his councils, and hold them, with his allies, at her house, excited no surprise ; but that she should appear as his official representative at Court, bearing a blank treaty with his signature, was an unlooked-for and scandalous tribute to her ascendancy over him. Gifted as she was, the situation was beyond her control. Mazarin's chief object in negotiating was to gain time.

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

He was convinced that the Princes' party must ultimately be dissolved by faction ; and, while it suited his purpose to keep the Duchess occupied with elaborate preliminaries, he had no intention of conceding any important point. He was ably seconded by one of the most accomplished intriguers of the time ; the Abbé Fouquet,¹ who contrived to be so much in the confidence of both parties that although for many years he posed as the confidential adviser of Madame de Châtillon, he has also been spoken of as Mazarin's ' *Éminence grise*'. The crowning glory of a return from St. Germain with the concluded treaty was denied to the Duchess ; she accomplished little more than her predecessors ; but, as may be seen in her correspondence with Lenet, and with others, months passed before she relinquished her hopes.

The fact that peace negotiations were in progress did not affect the active continuation of the war. Mazarin's hand was strengthened by Turenne's success against the army of the Princes at Étampes (May 4th). " Madame de Châtillon ", as Retz maliciously observes, " was received at St. Germain as though she had been Minerva in person " ; the only difference, he adds, was that Minerva would presumably have foreseen the reverse which took place a few days later. Tavannes and Valon had relaxed their watchfulness, to do honour to Mademoiselle, who passed through the camp on her way from Orleans to Paris. While the Princess was being greeted, with many picturesque ceremonies, on the slopes beyond the town, Turenne made use of the opportunity to attack an outlying force, which he cut to pieces. Mademoiselle was forced to continue her journey in haste. Tavannes retired with his forces into Étampes, and there found himself surrounded by the enemy ; cut off from Paris, and also from the Spanish reinforcements, which were daily expected from the northern frontier. Condé saw, too late, how little he could rely on the substitutes he had chosen. Tavannes was held fast in Étampes ; the provinces were drained of troops, to the last man ; and the Prince found himself, for the moment, with absolutely no force at his disposal, in case of emergency. As a last resource, he determined to try the mettle of the ' *milices bourgeoises* ', the citizen soldiers whose exploits had caused him so much amusement in the

¹ Basile Fouquet, brother of Nicholas Fouquet, finance minister.

siege of Paris. The occasion was soon provided, when, early on the morning of May 10th, an alarm was spread that a Royalist force was marching on St. Cloud. Condé and Beaufort set out to ascertain the truth of the report, and found half the population under arms, clamouring to be allowed to follow them. Beaufort, true to his character, cried out : " Qui m'aime me suive ", and summoned each and all to " dénicher les Mazarins ". Condé, eyeing his recruits with more suspicion, told them that they might come or stay, as they chose ; " only ", he added, " I would rather take none but bachelors ; for if I take married men, and if some of them never come back, their wives will make too much noise ".¹ Notwithstanding this warning, some thousands of the citizens declared themselves willing to face all risks. Condé superintended the marshalling of the battalions, and placed himself at their head, surrounded by a bodyguard of nearly all the nobles in Paris. Before they reached St. Cloud, it was discovered that the rumoured advance had been no more than a feint, and that the Royalists were already retiring ; but the Prince, unwilling to waste so much warlike enthusiasm merely changed the direction of his march and announced his intention of making a night attack on St. Denis, which was held by a Swiss garrison for the King.

The preliminaries were observed in due order. At eleven o'clock at night, Condé's messenger appeared before the gates of St. Denis, and summoned Dumont, the officer in command of the garrison, to surrender. Dumont refused ; his force was small, and the place was indifferently fortified ; but he had resolved that the Abbey of St. Denis should serve him as a citadel, and here he hoped to hold out until further instructions should reach him from Turenne or from the King. Condé advanced to the attack, and had reached the edge of the moat, when the first shots were fired from the walls. The result was disastrous ; the Prince afterwards admitted that he had never in his life seen any panic so sudden, or so complete, as that which seized his citizen army at the sound of the cannon ; and not the citizens only, but, shameful to relate, a large proportion of the gentlemen of his bodyguard. Only La Rochefoucauld, Marcillac, Guitaut, and a few others stayed beside him, and helped to check

¹ Conrart, *Mémoires*.

the rout. The garrison was too small either to keep up a heavy fire, or to defend all the points where the fortifications were in bad repair. Condé re-formed his battalions, and led the foremost across the moat—the water, in some places was not more than knee-deep—and through a breach in the wall. Those in the rear were encouraged, by the sight, to follow; and, last of all, came the fugitives of the Prince's body-guard, each one alleging some particular reason for having left him.¹ Dumont, after offering slight resistance in the streets of the town, withdrew into the Abbey precincts, and prepared to make a stubborn defence, to the dismay of the religious community, who saw their buildings threatened with plunder and desolation, and who implored him to surrender, before the Prince should carry out his expressed intention of lighting faggots under the walls. The sub-prior, finding these entreaties vain, asked leave to seek an interview with Condé himself, hoping to gain a respite, if nothing more.² Dumont consented; and the sub-prior, summoning all his courage, sallied out by a side door. He was no sooner recognised than Guitaut and another young officer, the Comte de Fonville, took hold of him by the hands and led him to where the Prince, on a white horse, was directing operations at the head of a neighbouring street. Guitaut and his companion did their best to protect their charge, but small discipline was observed; the men pulled his monastic habit, and made game of him as he passed. Condé saluted 'with his hand to his hat', as they approached him; but his words were not reassuring. He knew that the more merciless he appeared, the more eagerly the monks would press for a surrender. "Mon père", he said, "I am sorry that Dumont should oblige me to take your monastery by force; for it follows that you must be either burned or plundered, and then everyone will say that I am a monster". The sub-prior, terrified and indignant, began by complaining of the treatment he had received. "Show me anyone who struck you, and he shall die", answered the Prince; but the good father was not

¹ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

² For the account of the sub-prior's mission, and of Condé's dealings with the community, see *Extrait du livre des choses Mémorables de St. Denis*, published with the *Extraits des Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville*, by the Société de l'Histoire de France.

eager for vengeance. He contented himself with asking that the attack might be deferred until a messenger already dispatched to St. Germain, should return with the King's orders ; it was probable that His Majesty would send word to Dumont to surrender, and there would then be no need for further violence. The request was made under difficulties ; for, according to the monk's narrative, " the Prince's horse pawed the air continually with its fore-feet, so that no one could approach ". The rider was equally impatient ; he would hear of no conditions, and swore, with many oaths, that, in a quarter of an hour, if the garrison had not surrendered, the whole building should be set alight. The sub-prior hastened back, and renewed his persuasions to Dumont. Condé waited without, fuming over the delay, and ordering faggots to be brought ; from the windows of the Abbey the monks watched him riding up and down, with a torch-bearer on either side ; and the sight added new fervour to their petitions. Dumont gave way at length, feeling his position to be hopeless ; he yielded himself and his garrison prisoners of war, only stipulating that the officers might be released on parole, and that their exchange might be effected as soon as possible.

It was four o'clock in the morning before the last of the garrison marched out of the Abbey, and Condé, at the Abbot's invitation, consented to come in and refresh himself. When all excitement was past, he became acutely conscious of having neither eaten nor rested for close on twenty-four hours ; he could scarcely stand, on dismounting, and the sub-prior, who had so lately trembled before him, supported him into the refectory and sent for food. The rule of the community forbade meat, but the monks, with some apology, proffered eggs and fruit : ' *Je vous en prie* ', answered the Prince ; and fell to on the nearest provisions ; his hosts, who noted his every movement, record that he ate a large piece of bread, and a ' *bon chrétien* ' pear ; and that when two boiled eggs were brought, he took one, and gave the other to La Rochefoucauld. All the officers were famished ; an omelet, prepared for M. le Prince, was intercepted and devoured by them before it reached the table. Condé, having finished his meal, thanked the sub-prior graciously, bade him farewell, and rode back to Paris ;

leaving a promise that the Abbey should be safe from his troops thenceforward.

As a military operation, the taking of St. Denis was insignificant; although the vivid impression of the Prince, afforded by the monastic chronicle, gives it a claim to be recorded in detail. No adequate force could be left to hold the place, which was recaptured, twelve hours later, by the Royalists. But as a factor in the relations between Condé and the Parisians, the expedition was not without result. Every citizen who had taken part in it now boasted that he had been to the wars with M. le Prince; each one forgot his own discomfiture, and, in the bosom of his family, 'remembered, with advantages, the feats he did that day'. Condé need only have humoured this vanity to give his popularity a fresh lease of life. He knew, to a certain extent, the importance of public opinion at this juncture, and had even made a few most unwonted efforts to secure it; his enemies were pardonably sceptical when, on the occasion of a religious procession, organised 'to implore the assistance of Heaven against Cardinal Mazarin', the Prince stood among the crowd, side by side with Beaufort, and showed extravagant devotion as the reliquary of Ste. Geneviève was carried past. But nature, and the habits of a lifetime, were too strong for him; after the affair of St. Denis, a correspondent of Mazarin's writes that "M. le Prince fit des railleries aux bourgeois", on the subject of their flight, "dont les bourgeois se sont fort piqués".¹ No man had less sympathy than Condé with the 'psychology of crowds'. The Parisians, burghers and 'canaille' alike, represented, for him, the two qualities he most abhorred—namely, cowardice and stupidity; to these, he opposed two most unpopular weapons, and was either sarcastic, or violently impatient. One day, as he went unwillingly to attend a debate in Parliament on the proposed peace with the Court, he found the ante-rooms of the Palais de Justice thronged by a mob of the lowest class of citizens, who as they watched him pass, shouted unceasingly: 'La paix! la paix!' The cry was afterwards proved to have been first raised by certain paid agents of the Abbé Fouquet, but was re-echoed by the crowd with deafening persistence. Condé, exasperated, suddenly shot out a

¹ * *Archives Étrangères*, Paris,

hand, and caught hold of a man who stood near and who was yelling louder than the rest, "What kind of peace do you want?" he asked him fiercely, shaking him as he spoke. "What conditions? Answer me! Do you want Mazarin to go or stay?" The man, terrified by this onslaught, could only stammer out the party catchwords, "Monseigneur, la paix—point de Mazarin!" "Well", said the Prince, "don't you see that that is what we are working for? Why make such a noise?"¹

While the Parliament was occupied in publishing decrees against him, Mazarin, for his part, did not confine himself to negotiations with the Princes; but was actively engaged in treating with their supposed ally, the Duke of Lorraine. Five months had passed since Duke Charles, urged by Madame, his sister, had signed a treaty, promising his coveted support to the rebels; but he had, so far, shown no sign of carrying his word into effect. The irresponsible pose he affected was merely a cloak for diplomacy, and he was perfectly aware of the advantages to be gained by hesitation. On May 22nd, Turenne laid definite siege to Étampes. The Princes renewed their demands for further assistance from Spain; but the Spanish Government, wholly bent on the conquest of Flemish fortresses, paid Duke Charles to undertake the relief of Étampes, and to leave their Generals free to besiege Dunkirk and the lesser ports, while France was disabled by civil war. Having, by this means, secured a considerable sum of money, over and above that which had been promised in the original terms of the treaty, the Duke consented to lead his army across the frontier; he advanced as far as Magny, where he left his troops, and came to Paris to confer with the Princes. Such, at least, was the nominal object of his journey; but while, for several days, he seemed to avoid all serious conversation, and kept his company half-amused, half-scandalised by his antics, he was in reality debating whether to keep to his first promise, or to yield to Mazarin's bribes. Both Monsieur and Condé more than suspected him of double dealing. Condé went so far as to observe to Made-moiselle that he was not satisfied with an ally whose troops only advanced at a rate of five miles a day; but remonstrance was impossible, for the smallest

¹ Conrart, *Mémoires*.

provocation might turn the scale in favour of the Court. The position was indeed humiliating! Condé found himself obliged to receive the guest of his party with all honour, to bear with his impertinences, and even, on certain occasions, to yield him precedence. Duke Charles, agreeably conscious of his own power, gave himself up to the pleasure of driving the representatives of both parties to the extreme limit of patience. He paid many compliments to Mademoiselle, whom he diverted against her will; but he was no sooner approached on affairs of State than, as she says, "he began to sing and dance, so that no one could help laughing". The most practised intriguers were helpless before him. He accepted Monsieur's invitation to a conference at the Luxembourg; but, seeing Retz among the company, he fell on his knees, and called for a rosary: "With priests, one must pray; all they are good for is to say prayers". The Duchesse de Chevreuse, who came as an emissary from the Court, fared no better; she found the Duke playing on a guitar. "Let us dance, Mesdames; it will suit you far better than talking politics".¹ While their leader thus amused himself, the army of Lorraine advanced, by the slow stages of which Condé complained, to Villeneuve-St.-Georges. The Princes, with Mademoiselle and her ladies, visited the camp (June 7th), and were royally entertained by the Duke; who, as a climax to the feast, made a solemn undertaking to attack Turenne on the following day. He offered to pledge his word in writing; but Monsieur, being, with the rest, in a convivial humour, declared that a promise was enough. Next day came, and with it the news that Turenne, hearing of the Lorrainers' approach, had raised the siege. Duke Charles promptly changed his tactics. With Turenne free to take the offensive, the state of affairs demanded an increase of caution; especially from a prince without lands, whose fortunes depended entirely on his troops, and who must therefore on no account risk a crushing defeat. For a week the Duke continued at Villeneuve—an excellent strategic position—observing the movements of both Turenne's and Tavannes' forces; while envoys and messengers plied ceaselessly between Paris, the camp, and the Court. In the end, the directness of Turenne's methods succeeded where those of skilled diplomatists had failed.

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

The Royalists drew off to the north-west, from Étampes, and halted, maintaining a position between the army of the Princes and that of Lorraine. Tavannes, with his released force, took his way to St. Cloud, where the Prince meant to fix his headquarters ; while the Court, in constant fear of being cut off from Turenne's protection, removed from St. Germain to Corbeil, and from Corbeil to Melun. Turenne waited till the King had accomplished his journey in safety ; then, striking camp on June 14th, he advanced rapidly upon Villeneuve. In vain Duke Charles sought to delay him ; artifices and negotiations were swept aside, and the Marshal issued his ultimatum ; the Duke must either fight, or withdraw his forces, and that instantly. The sight of the Royalist army, drawn up in full order of battle, proved an irresistible argument. Within a few hours a new treaty had been signed ; Mazarin's bribe was accepted ; and on the morning of June 16th the Lorrainers left Villeneuve, to retrace their steps across the frontier.

Great was the wrath and consternation among the party of the Princes ! At the Luxembourg, indignation was at its height ; Monsieur swore, Madame wept for a whole day, and Mademoiselle rated her without mercy ; treating her—somewhat unjustly—as responsible for her brother's defection. “ My zeal for our cause overcame me ”, Mademoiselle admits ; and well it might. With Duke Charles had departed, not only ten thousand fighting men, but the last vestige of public confidence in the Princes. To invite an invasion of foreign troops had indeed been a desperate measure, and one which nothing but success could have justified ; as it was, the Parisians had seen the foreigners within a few miles of their gates, pillaging the country to support themselves ; and all to no purpose, since the ‘ Mazarins ’ had not been defeated, and the promised peace seemed to be no nearer than before. As Tavannes' forces drew near St. Cloud, the attitude of both Parliament and people became more definitely hostile. Conflicting accusations were levelled against Monsieur, against Condé, and even against Beaufort. “ I am tired of giving account for my actions to people of no importance, like you ! ” Condé exclaimed at last to a counsellor of the Parliament. “ When I make war, you accuse me of trying to dethrone the King ; when I propose an agreement, you call me

a Mazarin ! ”¹ The counsellor might have retorted that M. le Prince was doing his best to satisfy them by pursuing both courses at once ; for the negotiations with the Court had never been entirely dropped, and fresh efforts were constantly made by Chavigny, or by Madame de Châtillon, both of whom had private interests at stake. Lawlessness and tumult reigned on every side. The Princes mistrusted each other as thoroughly as the Parisians mistrusted them all ; each one was suspected of being ready to betray his whole party to the Court, if he could do so to his own advantage. The Parliament, incapable of any concerted or decisive action, was openly condemned by the people, whom the misery of long-standing wars had driven to desperation. On June 23rd, and again two days later, a crowd of rioters surrounded the Palais de Justice ; several leading members were attacked, and were rescued with difficulty from the hands of the mob. After the second uproar, the sittings of Parliament were discontinued for a time, and a relief committee was organised, to remedy the suffering and want among the people. But while the committee wrestled with their task,—hindered by a small company of ‘dames dévotes’, who were already dispensing charity, and who resented interference,—a crisis was fast approaching beyond the walls. Since the Duke of Lorraine’s retreat, Mazarin had resolved to concentrate the forces of his party in one supreme effort ; and La Ferté, at the head of three thousand men, was summoned from the eastern frontier to join Turenne. With this addition, the Royalist army numbered between eleven and twelve thousand men ; while that of the Princes had been reduced by their late reverses, and by desertions consequent on lack of payment to a bare seven thousand, all told ; a decisive action could scarcely fail to result in a victory for the King’s cause. The rebel army would either be surrounded in the open, or driven back against the walls of Paris ; and if, as Mazarin hoped, the authorities within the city should close the line of retreat by refusing to open their gates to the troops, defeat would mean annihilation.

Condé’s original instincts with regard to war and politics had reasserted themselves during the past weeks ; and the troops were no sooner released from

¹ Conrart, *Mémoires*.

Étampes than he decided to resume the command. He had been suffering from intermittent fever, that prevailing complaint of the time ; but he was able to join the forces at St. Cloud on June 16th, just as Duke Charles arrived at his decision. A few days later, the rumour that a Spanish detachment was marching to his support, caused him to seize the small town of Poissy, so as to ensure his allies a passage across the Seine. The Royalists advanced to Dammartin, keeping watch for these same reinforcements ; but the report proved groundless, and Turenne continued his march to St. Denis, closely accompanied by the Court.

The Prince had established his forces between St. Cloud and Gennevilliers, on a tongue of land surrounded on three sides by the Seine.¹ The bridge of St. Cloud secured his communications with the ' faubourgs ' or outskirts of Paris, which lay between him and the city walls. Turenne, being informed of this disposition, took prompt advantage of his own superior numbers. La Ferté, with a detachment of between three and four thousand men, was ordered to engage the enemy's attention by throwing a bridge of boats across the Seine above Épinay ; while Turenne led the main army along the right bank, intending to cross the river and conduct an attack at a lower point. Early on July 1st, Tavannes heard from a scouting-party that La Ferté's men had been seen at work on the bridge ; and sent such an urgent message to headquarters that Condé came up at full speed, under the impression that at least half the Royalist army had crossed already. On his arrival, he found the bridge still in an early stage of construction, but the builders had installed a battery on the Isle St. Denis, and all efforts to dislodge them were vain. As Condé drew near, a shot passed within a few inches of his head, and he was persuaded to take shelter in a neighbouring house ; where he held a council of war, at which Nemours, La Rochefoucauld, Beaufort, Tavannes, and others were present. Meanwhile a large body of troops had been sighted on the farther bank, marching towards Argenteuil, and the fact was duly reported to the Prince : " It is easy to see ", he said, addressing the council, " that M. de Turenne means to march either by Poissy or by Meudon and to attack us in the rear, while M. de La Ferté keeps us

¹ See upper diagram facing p. 388.

amused here with this bridge of his, over which he will take exactly as long as it suits him ; and then some fine morning we shall have them both on our hands ".¹ Therefore, he pointed out, their best course would be to take up a new position at Charenton, in the triangular space formed by the junction of the Seine with the Marne. Outnumbered as they were, they had not the smallest expectation of defeating Turenne, but they hoped to hold him in check until the long-promised Spanish reinforcements should be actually at hand. The shortest and safest route to Charenton was through Paris itself ; passing in by the Porte de la Conférence, on the west side of the city, and out by the Porte St. Antoine, on the south-east ; but the temper of the authorities was such, that admittance was more than doubtful, and an alternative route had to be decided on in case of need. The first under discussion lay south of Paris, along the left bank of the Seine, by Meudon, Grenelle, and the Faubourg St. Germain ; this was abandoned at the instance of Monsieur, who, hastily consulted, sent a message to discourage the scheme, in the strongest language of which he was capable. He knew that he was exposing Condé and the troops to great danger ; but Retz, and other of the Prince's enemies, eagerly represented how, in the event of any engagement in the Faubourg St. Germain, the Palace of the Luxembourg and its inhabitants would be gravely imperilled. Monsieur's wishes could not be lightly disregarded, since he was the only Prince representing their party in Paris ; it was on his influence, for want of better, that Condé depended for keeping open the line of retreat. A third route was finally agreed upon. Before sunset, on July 1st, the whole force crossed the bridge of St. Cloud, and halted in the Cours-la-Reine ; then finding, as the Prince had foreseen, no admittance by the Porte de la Conférence, turned aside through the Bois de Boulogne, and prepared to skirt the walls by the northern and eastern faubourgs—St. Honoré, Montmartre, St. Denis, St. Martin, St. Antoine—until Charenton was reached. No time was to be lost, for at any moment Turenne might discover the manœuvre, and turn back in pursuit ; and the line of march left both flank and rear exposed to attack. All night the troops held on their way through the faubourgs. As they left

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

the Cours, Mademoiselle, in her apartment at the Tuileries, was roused by the sound of their drums and trumpets, and stood at her window till two in the morning listening to the regimental marches. She knew, only too well, how easily her father's fear for his own safety, and his jealousy of M. le Prince, would be turned to account ; " and I thought with sorrow ", she says, " of all that might come to pass ".

Condé's advance-guard, under Tavannes, was followed by a second column, commanded by Nemours ; the Prince, hourly expecting Turenne's approach, had chosen his own place with the third column, or rear-guard. At nightfall, since no enemy had been sighted, he left his troops with orders to continue their route, whilst he made a short cut through Paris, without escort, and secured an interview with Monsieur, by the way. Admittance could scarcely be refused him when he came alone ; but the conference at the Luxembourg was brief and discouraging. Monsieur had that day been informed of a message sent by the King to the *Prévôt des Marchands*, conjuring ' *messieurs de la ville* ' to give no shelter to the rebels ; and he was privately resolved to do nothing which might turn popular feeling against himself ; he made vague promises and suggestions, knowing that time was on his side, and that the Prince could not wait to be satisfied before hastening back to his post. A night march was slow and difficult through the narrow, ill-lighted ways of the faubourgs ; and Condé, passing out soon after midnight by the *Porte St. Martin*, found that the troops had covered less distance than he expected. Tavannes was scarcely beyond the *Faubourg St. Antoine* ; the rear-guard had not passed the *Porte du Temple*. At dawn, a reconnaissance made from *Montfaucon* showed that all hope of gaining a position at *Charenton* must be abandoned. The Royalist advance-guard, marching in battle order, had reached *Charonne* ; Turenne had received warning, and had marched all night. Conde reviewed the situation in a flash. He sent orders to Tavannes to turn back, by the way he had come, and to take up the most advantageous position which he could find near at hand. Another messenger was dispatched to Monsieur, entreating him to use every means in his power for keeping open a line of retreat through the gates, and also to send out a reinforcement

of whatever armed men the city could furnish. Beaufort was told off to assist in mustering these troops. The messenger to the Luxembourg had orders, should Monsieur's answer be unfavourable, to carry on the request to Mademoiselle; but even this staunch ally had shown signs of wavering. Her disapproval of the negotiations with the Court, and, above all, of Madame de Châtillon's part in them, had gone near to estranging her sympathies; and it was with no positive confidence that Condé framed his message, begging her 'not to desert him'. Already it seemed as though help might be too late. The Prince had not left Montfaucon when word came that the cavalry of his rear-guard had been attacked by the enemy's advance-guard, under Navailles, and was faring badly. Two squadrons had been cut to pieces, before Condé's own vigorous resistance, and the sight of Tavannes' troops posted in the Faubourg St. Antoine, checked the pursuit, causing Navailles to draw back, and await Turenne under the heights of Charonne.

It was soon after six o'clock, on a hot and sunny morning (July 2nd), that Condé reached the Faubourg St. Antoine, where Tavannes was already preparing defences. The situation, in truth, was almost desperate. The army of the Princes had been further reduced by the detachment of a force to hold Poissy, and now numbered less than six thousand; Turenne, with eight thousand, was even now upon them, and La Ferté, with over three thousand more, had only to come up from Épinay. Condé looked towards the open country, and knew that enemies were closing round him; while behind him there stood the locked gates of the city, and the guns of the Bastille. Paris had awakened to hear that M. le Prince had been brought to bay, and that in a few hours he must be either dead or a prisoner; and the news drew forth the citizens, in hundreds, to line the walls near the Porte St. Antoine, eager as Romans for a gladiatorial show. The same tidings had reached the Court of St. Denis; and not long after daybreak Mazarin, with the young King, mounted the heights of Charonne, to see, from afar, "his desire upon his enemies". Two courses were open to the Prince; either he might send, at this eleventh hour, to ask for terms, and surrender himself a prisoner at discretion; or, he might make a last stand in his present position, and, if all help failed him, sell his life and liberty as

dearly as possible. Being the man he was, he chose the second alternative, without hesitation. If the King had come out to Charonne, and the Parisians to their walls, to see him conquered, they should first see him fight. His officers were, one and all, of the same mind. Death had grievously thinned the ranks of the 'petits-mâîtres' since the days of Fribourg and Nördlingen; but the spirit of reckless courage and lightheartedness survived in full force, and, where Condé led, never lacked representatives.

The outlines of the Faubourg St. Antoine are described in French records as those of a 'patte d'oie'; and it would be hard to find a better description. The three principal streets start from the Porte St. Antoine, and diverge; the Grande Rue du Faubourg leading straight down the centre, the Rue de Charenton to the right, and the Rue de Charonne to the left. These three principal thoroughfares, which still exist, were connected by a network of smaller streets, interspersed with fields and gardens. Condé founded his defences on the barricades erected, a few weeks earlier, by the inhabitants, against the approach of the troops of Lorraine; in addition, houses and garden walls were hurriedly fortified and loop-holed. Three guns were posted at the cross-roads of La Croix-Faubin, half-way down the Rue de Charonne; four more were ranged, two and two, at intervals in the Grande Rue de Faubourg. Valon commanded in the Rue de Charonne; Tavannes in the Rue de Charenton; Clinchamp in the Grande Rue. Condé, with his usual staff of 'volontaires'—l'escadron doré—had no fixed post; his presence was all-pervading. For an hour, or more, the enemy seemed quiescent. Turenne had joined Navailles at Charenton, and was waiting to begin the attack until La Ferté's troops should come up. But the King and Mazarin were in no humour for delay; Condé was already outnumbered, and they were impatient for victory. Pressing orders were sent to the Marshal; and his brother, the Duc de Bouillon, added the warning that any hesitation might be construed into a lurking sympathy with M. le Prince. Thus urged, Turenne had no choice. He proceeded immediately to make dispositions for three direct frontal attacks; one, he would lead himself, on the Grande Rue; St. Maigrin was charged with a second, to be

directed on the Rue de Charonne ; Navailles was to attack Tavannes in the Rue de Charenton.

Shortly before eight o'clock, a preliminary attack was attempted by a detachment of the Royalist advance-guard in the hope of surprising the defenders of the Rue de Charonne before their preparations were complete ; but the Prince, audaciously taking the offensive, sallied out with two or three squadrons of light horse, and charged so effectively that the attacking force retired in disorder upon the main army. Condé had regained his position, when St. Maigrin's troops moved forward ; two infantry battalions, and the household cavalry ; the latter magnificent to behold, with 'force plumes et force dorure'. Their leader was a private, as well as a public, enemy of the Prince ; that same Marquis de St. Maigrin whose suit Marthe du Vigean had summarily refused seven years earlier, and who had never forgiven Condé for outrivalling him, nor ceased to look for vengeance. The difference in rank forbade his challenging M. le Prince in any personal quarrel ; but he could, and did, firmly purpose to kill him with his own hand in battle.¹ This intention he confided to certain of his friends, who were to ride near him, throughout the day, in the thickest of the fight, and to lose no opportunity of surrounding the Prince. St. Maigrin hurled his infantry against Valon's barricade, and at the first onslaught carried all before him ; the defences were swept aside, and the cavalry pressed on up the street. Still he had not found what he sought ; Condé was not in the Rue de Charonne, but was dispatching orders right and left from the market-place of the Faubourg. At the same moment, Turenne, coming up with the main body of infantry, attacked in the centre. St. Maigrin heard the sound of firing ; leaving his troops, he turned to the left, followed by those in his confidence, and dashed up a side street towards the Grande Rue. His chance of revenge escaped him by a hair's breadth ; a moment later Condé charged like a whirlwind, out of the market-place into the Rue de Charonne, driving back the Royalists to the outermost barricade. The loss was heavy on both sides ; in the words of Marigny's record,² 'un carnage horrible'. St. Maigrin paid for his rashness with his

¹ Conrart, *Mémoires*.

² *Relation véritable*, written by Marigny, the day after the fight.

life ; he was shot dead, at the corner of a narrow street, where the fighting was fierce ; and beside him fell Mazarin's nephew, Paul Mancini. Valon and Clinchamp were both disabled. The Royalists, strong in their greater numbers, brought forward fresh troops ; Navailles attacked Tavannes in the Rue de Charenton ; and now, the whole line on either side was engaged. For more than four hours, in the heat of the day, and under a scorching sun, successive attacks broke like waves against the barricades. More than once the enemy forced a way through and penetrated into the heart of the faubourg ; but only to be beaten back again, leaving their dead to mark the turning-point. Condé fought like one possessed ; the Royalists said that he was no man, but a devil ; only a devil could fight as he did, and be present at once, as he seemed to be, at each point of attack. Turenne was asked afterwards " if he had seen M. le Prince during the action " ; and answered : " I saw a dozen of him—or more ".¹ The Marshal admits that the rebels held their own on every side, excepting in the Rue de Charenton, where Navailles seized the outer defences, and kept possession of them ; his men fought their way beyond the Jardin de Rambouillet, in spite of Tavannes' best efforts. Condé was preparing to lead his last reserves of infantry against them, when Beaufort emerged from the city gates, with the few followers he had been able to muster. Their number was so small as to be almost negligible, and the authorities let them pass without difficulty. Beaufort himself was burning for a chance of distinction, and scarcely waited for the Prince's permission, before setting off at full speed to recapture the barricades ; followed by Nemours, La Rochefoucauld, and a troop of others, who would have counted it disgrace to stay behind. Navailles held the houses on either side of the barricade, and bullets rained from their windows ; in a few moments, more than half Beaufort's companions were killed or disabled. Nemours was twice wounded ; La Rochefoucauld was shot in the face, and fell, blinded and helpless. The Royalists, beaten back a few yards by the onslaught, came on again, and would have made prisoners of all the survivors ; when Condé, with infantry of ' Bourgogne ', came up, under a hot fire ; held back the enemy, and covered

¹ Turenne, *Mémoires*.

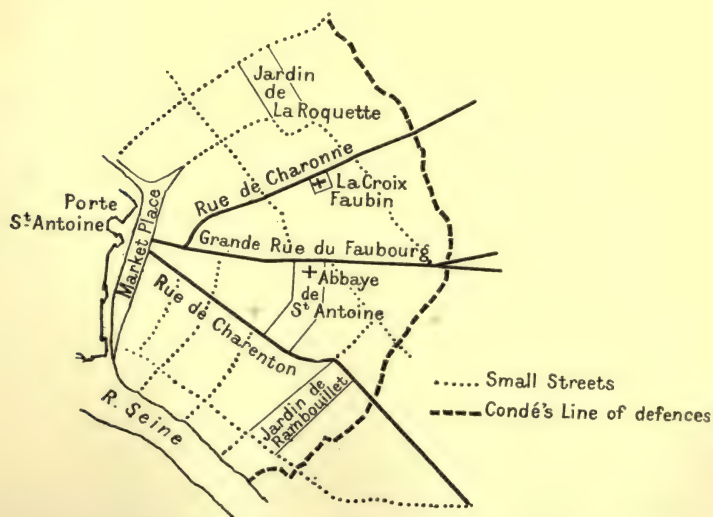
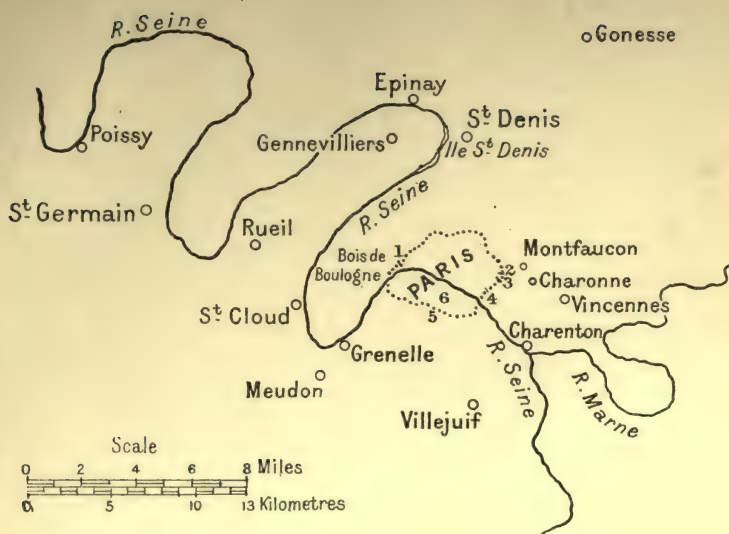
the retreat of the wounded. 'Bourgogne' lost nine officers in this engagement alone, besides thirteen sergeants and many men.¹ The barricade was cleared of the enemy's troops, but the Prince had no force to hold it, and was obliged to draw back towards the market-place.

The exact sequence of incidents in such a day is not easy to trace ; many records exist, but no one writer was calm enough to take accurate note of the lapse of time. There seems, however, no doubt that it was directly after the fight in the Rue de Charenton, when his last reserves were exhausted, and when most of his friends had fallen before his eyes, that Condé received the message which was to change the face of the day for him and for his followers. Mademoiselle—self-willed, hot-tempered, but staunch to her allies—had worked a miracle. Condé's appeal had waked her at six o'clock that morning, and since that time she had expended herself in efforts on his behalf.² Monsieur, encouraged by Retz, had already sent his usual answer to all inconvenient requests ; namely, that illness prevented him from making the necessary exertion. Mademoiselle hurried to the Luxembourg, and found him standing on the stairs. She implored him, with tears, either to go and assist M. le Prince, or else, for very shame, to take to his bed, and play the invalid more convincingly. He would do neither ; fear for his own safety had deadened every other consideration. All she could win from him, after more than an hour's entreaty, in which Rohan and Chavigny joined, was leave to go in his name to the Hôtel de Ville and obtain what favour she might from the civic authorities. This permission was enough for the Princess ; she confronted the Maréchal de l'Hôpital, Governor of Paris, Le Fèvre, Prévôt des Marchands, and the whole municipal body ; and requested their help, with all the assurance she could command. She began by asking for a levy of troops, and kept to the last the supreme appeal that they would open their gates to the Princes' army, and close them to the King's. At first she met only with discouragement ; the Governor intimated to her,

¹ Official list of killed and wounded, published with Marigny's *Relation véritable*.

² For the whole account of Mademoiselle's proceedings during the day, see her *Mémoires* ; also the *Régistres de l'Hôtel de Ville*.

with a plainness she would not have borne at another time, that the Prince had only himself to thank for his present position. But she was too much bent on her object to take offence, and would not be drawn into argument: "Gentlemen", she said, "M. le Prince is in danger in your faubourgs. Think of the shame and grief that would fall upon Paris if he perished there through your fault. You can help him; therefore lose no time!" Her enthusiasm carried the day; L'Hôpital had been accounted a staunch loyalist, but he wavered at the thought of being held responsible for the death of a 'premier Prince'. Mademoiselle spent some time in an agony of suspense, while the council withdrew for deliberation; but at length the Governor informed her that all her requests would be granted. Her triumph was complete; she dispatched an urgent message to Condé, and started, herself, for the Porte St. Antoine to see that her orders were carried out. Princesses of that time were not over-susceptible; but the sights that greeted her on her way, robbed her of sleep that night. The tide of public feeling had been turned by the sight of Condé's heroic resistance; the great gates were still closed, but the 'guichet', or small door, of the Porte St. Antoine stood open to admit the wounded. As Mademoiselle drew near the gates, the ghastly procession met her; many of her own acquaintance were there; Valon, Guitaut, and La Rochefoucauld among them. "At every step", she says, "I met wounded men; some on foot or on horseback, some carried on litters, on planks, or on 'hand-barrows'". She was thankful to turn aside into a house by the Bastille, just inside the gates, which an official had placed at her disposal; and here, soon after midday, the Prince came to meet her, in answer to her message. The desperate struggle of the Rue de Charenton had been succeeded by a lull; each side drew back, to take breath, before returning to the charge; and Condé, hearing that the ally who had saved him was so close at hand, passed in alone to thank her. There was not an instant to lose, for the attack might be renewed at any moment; he came, as Mademoiselle describes him, straight out of the fight, a strange and terrifying figure; dishevelled, exhausted, covered with blood and dust, and holding a naked sword in his hand,—the sheath had been lost.



He had toiled and fought for many hours, with every fibre of his being ; and now, as the tension suddenly relaxed, the nervous force that had sustained him gave way ; without a word, he gave his sword to the nearest attendant, dropped on to a seat, and burst into tears. The Princess watched him, in blank astonishment, till he was able to speak ; when he apologised to her, saying, " You must forgive my grief ; I have lost all my friends ! " Mademoiselle reassured him eagerly ; she had seen Guitaut and La Rochefoucauld, and had tidings of Nemours ; these, at least, though wounded, were neither dead nor despaired of. " This ", she says, " consoled him a little ". He collected himself to give orders for the passing in of the baggage, which he begged her to superintend ; but he refused to take her advice and seek his own safety that very hour ; ' in full daylight ', as he said, ' before the Mazarins '. Mademoiselle remained at her post, proud, but half-frightened at her own boldness. She was visited during the day by Madame de Châtillon, who appeared, for once, thoroughly at a disadvantage ; her vaunted efforts for peace had not saved Condé from this predicament, and it was credibly reported that she had consulted her own interests rather than his ; but she now made great demonstrations of anxiety, to the unconcealed scorn of the Princess.

Condé returned to the scene of action to find that eight of La Ferté's guns had come up, and were preparing to open fire on the Grande Rue. Tavannes was disposing the troops under cover ; which he did with such success that two or three hours of the enemy's fire resulted in less loss of life than the earlier engagements ; although the street was raked almost from end to end. Still, it was clearly impossible to delay the retreat longer than was absolutely necessary to save the appearance of a rout. Of the Prince's officers, the greater number were either dead or severely wounded ; the day was fittingly described as " rude pour les personnes de qualité ". The men were exhausted ; they had marched all night, and fought since the early morning. The heat throughout the day had been intolerable, and had added greatly to their hardships ; Condé, half-stifled in a buff-coat and cuirass, had turned aside, at one moment, into a field of the faubourg, let himself be disarmed and undressed, and rolled naked in the grass—' as horses do,' says the

chronicler ; then was equipped again, and went back to the fight.¹ La Ferté's men were at hand, comparatively fresh ; no force that Paris could send out would avail against them ; all that remained for the Prince's troops was to withdraw.

While dispositions were being made for the retreat, there came a second message from Mademoiselle ; her father had joined her at the gates, and wished to see the Prince. The summons had to be obeyed, for Monsieur might, even yet, assert himself inconveniently. Condé found his Royal Highness relieved of all anxiety, advancing to meet him with smiles, and apparently quite unconscious of having failed him in any respect. Mademoiselle was overwhelmed with shame on his behalf ; she begged Condé, privately, to abstain, for her sake, from any reproaches ; and, in gratitude to her, he allowed himself to be embraced and congratulated without a word of complaint. He was less forbearing towards Madame de Châtillon, and levelled such furious glances at her, that she retired in confusion ; Mademoiselle looked on, exultant ; little knowing how short-lived such anger was likely to be.

After a brief interview, Monsieur expressed his formal consent to the entrance of the army into Paris. Condé returned to join his troops ; and Mademoiselle—possibly at his suggestion—went to inspect the defences of the Bastille. The Royalists had ceased fire, and were withdrawing their batteries ; this fact was triumphantly announced in the faubourg. Condé, however, was convinced that the enemy could only be simulating retreat ; and ascended the bell-tower of the Abbey of St. Antoine to make a survey. He saw, as he had expected, that the whole of the Royalist reinforcements had come up, and that Turenne's intention was to surround him under the very walls of the city. One body of troops had turned to the right, towards La Roquette ; a second to the left, along the bank of the Seine. The Prince had arranged the order of his retreat some hours earlier ; he had only to descend from his coign of vantage, and give the word for it to be carried out in haste ; already the rear-guard must run considerable risk of being cut off. From the ramparts of the Bastille, Mademoiselle had similarly interpreted Turenne's manœuvre ; and the sight prompted the

¹ Conrart, *Mémoires*.

most audacious act of her life. She had wrested from Monsieur a signed paper to the effect that her word was to be obeyed like his own ; and now, by her order, the guns of the fortress were turned upon the advancing force ; the King's troops were threatened by the King's cannon. But for this extreme measure, Condé might still have been lost. His forces had been delayed by the difficulty of withdrawing the artillery from the batteries in the faubourg, and Turenne had high hopes of achieving his object ; when, to the amazement of all, the guns of the Bastille opened fire. The Royalists, almost incredulous, checked their march ; then, the shots were repeated. That warning could not be mistaken ; Paris was on the side of the Prince, who would now make a safe retreat through the gates, protected by the fire from the walls. The spectators on the hill of Charonne watched with dismay, while Turenne's forces, after a brief halt, withdrew slowly by the way they had come ; marching out beyond the faubourgs, to take up their headquarters north of St. Denis.

Condé passed into Paris, with his troops, just before sunset ; a General forced from his position by the enemy, yet one who—

“—for the manful part he played,
That fought so well with heart and hand”

—was hailed as a conqueror ; and that by the same citizens who had assembled in the morning to rejoice at his downfall. He rode, as those who saw him said, ‘like the god of war’, on a horse flecked with foam ; his sword was still in his hand—for the sheath had never been found—and he held his head very high.¹ The fight of St. Antoine was a last despairing effort in a lost and unworthy cause ; the party gained little by it ; but, by the testimony of friends and enemies alike, Condé's personal reputation had never been more gallantly upheld. “Never had the Prince better fulfilled the duties of a soldier or of a General”, says the Duke of York,² who fought throughout the day by the side of Turenne ; “nor had he ever been in greater danger. It was his courage alone which, in the early part of the day, saved his whole army from destruction”.

¹ Chavagnac, *Mémoires*.

² Afterwards James II of England.

CHAPTER XVIII

LAST DAYS OF THE FRONDE

1652 (*Continued*)

THE reaction of public feeling in favour of the Princes lasted for almost exactly forty-eight hours. In the succession of deplorable scenes which marks the closing stages of the Fronde, the leading actors seem to throw aside all traces of principle, of self-respect, and even of policy. Not one of Condé's moral or political errors, in the whole course of his career, was to bring more discredit on his name than his conduct during the armed riot—called, by some stretch of imagination, 'the massacre'—which took place at the Hôtel de Ville on July 4th, and destroyed, at one blow, the enthusiasm roused by the day of St. Antoine. To exonerate him from all blame, on this occasion, is manifestly impossible; but whether he must bear the responsibility of having actually organised the riot, or whether he can only be accused of culpable inaction in taking no steps to check it, has never been positively ascertained.

The facts patent to all observers were as follows. By general consent, an assembly had been convened at the Hôtel de Ville; Monsieur was to preside; the Parliament, the municipal authorities, the clergy, and the various trade guilds were all to be represented, for the ostensible object of "deliberating on the means of public safety". The leaders of the Princes' party made no secret of their expectations that the meeting would result in a "declaration of union" between themselves and the different bodies represented against the Court; and, as a consequence of the events of July 2nd, their hopes were shared by a large proportion of the citizens, especially those of the lower ranks. Certain officials, such as the Governor l'Hôpital, together with the more respectable 'bourgeoisie',

still clung to the idea of reconciliation, and of the King's return; and in the belief that their counsels might prevail, the Royal sanction had been given to the assembly. On the day appointed, the delegates, to the number of over three hundred, were duly mustered in the Hôtel de Ville. Without, in the Place de Grève, an excited crowd of the poorer citizens waited impatiently to hear the result of the debate; among them, it was noted, were men from the Princes' regiments of 'Condé' and 'Bourgogne', whose quarters were near at hand, in the Faubourg St. Victor. The sympathies of the mob were fully apparent. Before the fight of St. Antoine, Condé had decreed that each soldier in the army of the Princes should wear a wisp of straw as a distinguishing mark; while the King's men wore each a scrap of white paper for the same purpose. The Parisians had made these badges their own; and, on the day of the assembly, no man—not even a priest—could walk abroad in safety without displaying a wisp of straw. Mademoiselle set an example by wearing a large handful, tied to her fan with a blue ribbon; in short, straw was said to be no longer straw, it was 'fleur d'antimazarin'.¹ The time agreed upon for opening the deliberations was two o'clock; but four o'clock had struck before the Princes made their appearance. Monsieur's dread of being involved in any disturbance was so great that he could scarcely be persuaded to leave the Luxembourg; the joint arguments of Condé and Mademoiselle had been required to prevail upon him. On his arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, it seemed as though fear had paralysed his usually fluent utterance. His rank made him of necessity the spokesman of the party, and it lay with him to put forward the suggestion of a general coalition; instead of which he contented himself with thanking 'Messieurs de la ville' for their timely assistance in admitting the troops; and there stopped short. A letter from the King was read, in which His Majesty requested that all decisions might be deferred for a week; and Monsieur, eager to make his escape, gave the signal for the Princes to withdraw, on the pretext of leaving the company to deliberate. The Princes and the delegates were alike left with a sense of failure; each side had apparently expected suggestions to come from the other. As Monsieur passed out into the

¹ B.N., *Papiers de Lenet*; Marigny to Lenet, July 7.

Place de Grève his companions did not fail to denounce the proceedings of the assembly in full hearing of the crowd; and one voice—ascribed by some to a noted frondeur, the Comte de Béthune, and by others to Condé himself—cried out: “Those fellows are Mazarins! Do what you will with them!” Shouts of indignation arose in answer, and several musket-shots were fired against the walls and windows of the Hôtel de Ville; the Princes made no attempt to quell the tumult, but returned together to the Luxembourg. Half an hour later, when Monsieur was resting after his exertions, and Condé was looking through dispatches, with Mademoiselle, in the ante-room, there entered a messenger, breathless with haste and agitation, exclaiming that the mob were setting fire to the Hôtel de Ville, and preparing to murder the delegates. Monsieur came out of his room, half-dressed, to inquire what was the matter; and, being informed, turned at once to Condé, asking him to go and restore order; but the Prince answered sardonically, with the assurance of a man whose courage has never been questioned, “that he understood nothing of sedition, and in such cases was no better than a coward”. “Send M. de Beaufort”, he added, “the people know him and like him; he will be more useful than I could be”.¹ Beaufort was ordered forth accordingly; and Mademoiselle, encouraged by her late triumphs, volunteered to follow him. Condé, whatever harm he might wish the delegates, was shamed, at this point, into making a definite offer to accompany her, but nearly everyone present, including the Princess herself, dissuaded him; pointing out, with truth, that her presence might have a more pacifying effect than his, and that she would run far less personal risk than any Prince. While time passed in this discussion, no escape seemed possible for the occupants of the Hôtel de Ville. In vain they tried to pacify their enemies by drawing up, and displaying at a window, a written ‘act of union with the Princes’; the crowd would neither hear, nor see; faggots and pitch were brought, and the great door of the building was set alight. The soldiers on guard at the entrance, fired into the thickest of the press; many of the attacking mob were killed and wounded, and the fury of the rest was redoubled. Miron, ‘maître des

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

comptes,' a strong supporter of the Princes, was seized and brutally slaughtered, as he attempted to face them ; and Lemaire, the town clerk, was dangerously wounded. Still, no help arrived. Not Beaufort, nor even Mademoiselle, could gain admittance to the Place de Grève, past the chains which the rioters had stretched across the neighbouring streets, to cut off all approach ; the Princess waited in her carriage ; and Beaufort, who showed no great zeal to restore order, took shelter in a mercer's shop. As the smoke and flames poured into the hall, the delegates gave up all hope ; many of them made their confessions to the clerical members of the assembly, and prepared for death ; others hid themselves in remote parts of the building. The climax, though disgraceful enough, was less terrible than they anticipated. When, at length, the doors gave way, and the assailants surged in to work their will, they proved to be more bent on plunder than on murder ; out of the whole number of delegates whose lives had been threatened, only five met their death, struck down in the turmoil and confusion. Of the rest, many were roughly handled, and some few seriously injured. Nearly all were robbed of whatever money or jewels were found in their possession ; only a few of the more fortunate escaped by the windows, or succeeded in bribing the leaders of the mob to give them safe conduct home. It was not till close on eleven o'clock that night, when the hall was emptied of the crowd, that Beaufort and Mademoiselle at last made their appearance ; a way was cleared for the Princess, across the blackened and still smoking timbers, and she assisted at an exhaustive search, in every apartment of the Hôtel de Ville, for any delegates who might still be in hiding. None remained, excepting the ' prévôt des marchands ', who was found in one of the inner rooms, hastily disguised by a borrowed wig ; and who was at once safely escorted to his own house. The Marshal de l'Hôpital, regardless of his dignity as Governor, had borrowed a soldier's uniform, and so made his escape undetected. Beaufort exerted what authority he might to clear the Place de Grève, but it was morning before the mob was fully dispersed.

Such was the ' Massacre of the Hôtel de Ville ' ; rightly spoken of by Mademoiselle as " the death-blow of the party ". It must be admitted that, whatever harm

resulted to the Princes from the incidents of that day, was richly deserved. The enemies of M. le Prince never ceased to affirm positively that the riot had been expressly organised by him, with a view to quelling all possible opposition, and that he would have sacrificed the whole assembly, on account of the hostile attitude of some of its members. The charge has never been wholly disproved, in spite of Condé's denials, and of the testimony of many who were well qualified to judge ; among them, Tavannes, whom a personal quarrel with the Prince does not prevent from declaring that "common sense makes it impossible to believe such a calumny".¹ Retz puts forward an independent statement, to the effect that the whole disturbance originated in a plot against himself ; that the soldiers scattered among the mob had been placed there for the purpose of leading an attack on his dwelling, and that the anger of the mob was diverted, by some accident, towards the delegates.² But the Cardinal is notoriously untrustworthy where any tribute to his own importance is concerned ; and not even his assertion that Condé himself was his authority, has carried conviction to historians. Other evidence, still less to be relied on, is that of Monsieur ; who, a few months later, on restoring his allegiance to the Crown, confirmed indiscriminately, as was his habit, all charges made against his former allies. The question, as has been said, remains merely one of degree. Condé may not have made deliberate preparation for the slaughter of over three hundred men, the majority of whom were reckoned as his supporters ; but there is no doubt that, having found their response less ready than he expected, he made practically no effort to save them from a horrible death. Even Mademoiselle, while admitting that both her father and M. le Prince gave every sign of astonishment on first hearing of the riot, could not account for their conduct to her own satisfaction. "I never spoke of it", she says, "to either of them ; and I am glad to be in ignorance, because, if they had done wrong, I should not wish to know it". Although both Princes were implicated, the chief share of blame rested, by universal consent, on Condé ; Monsieur's disposition was too well known for him to be looked on as the leading spirit in any undertaking. M. le Prince was now, more than

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

² Retz, *Mémoires*.

ever, the 'demon' of the earlier Fronde; as at that time no abuse was too violent, no accusation concerning either his public or private life too odious, to be levelled against him.

The trend of popular feeling against the Princes was at once apparent; but, for the moment, intimidation had done its work, and they met with no organised resistance. L'Hôpital, forced to tender his resignation, was a helpless spectator, while a small section of the Parliament held a series of debates (July 15th-21st) at the Palais de Justice. In the course of these meetings, a price was set upon Mazarin's head, and all his possessions at the Palais-Royal were ordered to be sold; Monsieur was proclaimed "Lieutenant-General of the Kingdom"—the office he had held during the King's minority; Beaufort, Governor of Paris; and Condé, 'Généralissime'. This Parliament, so called, was in truth a mere remnant, consisting of those members who had so far committed themselves to the Fronde as to preclude all hope of Royal favour; the main body of counsellors, led by Molé, had obeyed a summons, issued by the King, to deliberate at Pontoise, where the Court was now in residence. The Prince attended regularly at the Palais de Justice, in spite of a renewed attack of fever. Illness of this nature, caused mainly by the summer heat, and the overcrowded state of the city, was reported on all sides; and Condé, leading a life of acute nervous strain, varied by dissipation, was not likely to escape. The treatment prescribed by his doctor was simple, but exhausting; Caillet, the Prince's secretary, writes to Lenet that M. le Prince went each day, with a violent headache, to hear the debate, and was bled each day on his return.¹ The course of events allowed him little rest. Notwithstanding their brief triumph, it was evident that, both in Paris and in the provinces, the Princes were losing ground. Disquieting tidings came from Bordeaux; Madame de Longueville and Conti were opposing Marsin and Lenet; funds were exhausted, and the prevailing want and disorder were scarcely less than in Paris itself. The attempts at treating with the Court, after languishing for a time, were revived, with the inevitable train of tedious and degrading intrigues; the Princes negotiated, collectively and individually; the Parliament in Paris negotiated, and at the same time

¹ B.N., July 22, 1652.

passed revolutionary decrees, which were revoked by the Parliament at Pontoise. Condé, though no more scrupulous than the rest, was less in his element, and felt himself at a disadvantage ; Monsieur was probably right in saying of him " that his cousin would rather have been at the head of four cavalry squadrons in Ardennes, than command twelve millions of the men who now surrounded him ".¹ One of his constant associates reported that " M. le Prince was so tired of hearing of the Parliament, the ' cours des aides ', the different assemblies, and the Hôtel de Ville, that, as he often declared, his Huguenot grandfather had never been more bored by the preachers of La Rochelle ". The Parliament and the assemblies of Bordeaux had also to be reckoned with ; Lenet's correspondence reveals complications far beyond the control of Conti, who nominally represented M. le Prince. Domestic troubles find a place in these letters, as well as public affairs ; the want of money was felt even in the Prince's household. Madame la Princesse was expecting the birth of her second child, in a few weeks' time ; the state of her health gave rise to great anxiety, and it seemed doubtful whether she could be provided with the attendance that her condition required. Condé's answers show more solicitude than might, perhaps, have been looked for by those who knew his relations with his wife ; he dispatched a doctor from Paris, and wrote of himself as being ' extrêmement en peine ' at the accounts which had reached him. More than once he asks to be kept constantly informed : " Send me news of my wife on every opportunity, and spare nothing for her health or to save the child ".² Possibly this last consideration was the one which weighed most with him ; in such a marriage as his, the tie between father and child was far closer than that between husband and wife.

The mistrust and dissension between the Princes culminated, within a month of the outrage at the Hôtel de Ville, in two incidents ; one tragic, one scandalous without the dignity of tragedy ; but both alike calculated to bring additional disgrace on the party. The first was a duel, the result of long-standing dislike and jealousy, between Beaufort and Nemours. Since the time of their first open quarrel, at Orleans, no effort had been spared to reconcile the two brothers-in-law.

¹ Retz, *Mémoires*.

² B.N., Condé to Lenet, August 24, 1652.

Beaufort would have relented ; but Nemours, highly sensitive and resentful, would give way on no point ; all that their friends could do to avert disaster, was to use every means for keeping them out of each other's sight. After the fight of St. Antoine, Nemours was supposed, for a time, to be disabled by his wound, and vigilance was relaxed ; but when it was known that he had nearly recovered, Gaston and Condé, as a precaution against immediate danger, exacted a solemn promise from him, as well as from Beaufort, that they would not meet for twenty-four hours (July 29th-30th). Nemours, however, was beyond the influence of any ordinary consideration of honour ; the day had not passed before he sent a challenge to Beaufort, couched in terms which made it almost impossible to refuse. They met a few hours later, in the Place des Petits-Pères, a secluded square behind the Hôtel de Vendôme ; the seconds—four on each side—engaged with swords, but the two principals fought with pistols, for Nemours was still uncertain of his strength. Beaufort protested to the last, in vain ; he was forced, in self-defence to fire. Nemours, rushing madly forward to attack him, was shot through the heart, and fell dead, without a word ; the priest in attendance had barely time to pronounce an absolution. Almost at the same instant Condé, half-distracted, appeared upon the scene. He had no great reason to love Nemours ; but, through some sudden access of nervous emotion, the horror of the situation overcame him completely, whereas bloodshed, on most occasions, left him unmoved. The graphic narrative in Marigny's letters¹ describes how M. le Prince was summoned by the news that "MM. de Beaufort and de Nemours had gone out together to fight", and how, in desperate haste, he set out on a nightmare-like expedition to stop them ; how the coachman was found to be hopelessly drunk, and how Condé "had him thrown off the box, and a valet put there instead" ; but only to arrive too late. Marigny writes as an eye-witness of what followed. He, and two of his friends, had been dining with the Comte de Béthune, and on leaving the house made a detour in order to pass by the place where Mazarin's effects were being publicly sold. As they drove past the narrow street leading to the Place des Petits-Pères, they met,

¹ B.N., Marigny to Lenet, July and August, 1652.

to their astonishment, " M. le Prince, looking more dead than alive, and supported by one of his gentlemen ". The carriage was instantly stopped ; Condé flung himself into it, and the tragedy was explained in a few words. A moment later, the dead body of Nemours was borne past ; " and at the sight ", says Marigny, " the Prince begged us to take him away ". They drove to the Hôtel de Condé, and thence, almost immediately, to the residence of Madame de Nemours ; for etiquette demanded that M. le Prince should be among the first to offer condolences. The same iron rule decreed that a widow of high rank could know no solitude, even in her supreme affliction ; she must recline upon a state bed, surrounded by her household, to receive expressions of formal sympathy. Mademoiselle, used as she was to such publicity, declared that ' nothing could be more pitiable ' than the condition of the poor young Duchess, as she lay before them, unconscious with grief, but with the curtains of the bed drawn back, that she might be exposed to view. It was well that she knew little of what was passing around her ; for—as will happen, at times, under the strain of tragic circumstance—some ludicrously obvious remark, made by one of the company, moved Madame de Guise, whom no one accused of levity, to irrepressible laughter. Mademoiselle and Condé followed suit, against their will ; and the visit had to be abruptly concluded, to save appearances.¹

Beaufort, though as free from blame as, given the situation, any man could well be, was at first absolutely prostrated by horror and remorse ; but, it is dispassionately recorded that, " on hearing how M. de Nemours had abused and threatened him, behind his back, on all occasions, he began to console himself ".² When, after a week's interval, he appeared once more in public, both Gaston and Condé received him without comment. Even had he been far more guilty than he was, they could not have dispensed with his alliance, in the existing state of the party. The day following Nemours' death had been marked by the second of these flagrant personal disputes ; one in which Condé, to his dishonour, played a leading part. Some trivial difference, concerning what Marigny calls " this accursed precedence ", had arisen between La Trémouille, Prince de Tarente, and the Comte de Rieux, a younger son of the

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² B.N., Marigny to Lenet, August 4, 1652.

House of Guise. Condé, who had warmly supported the cause of La Trémouille, came, that evening, to the Luxembourg, where Monsieur had undertaken to pronounce an arbitration. Rieux, however, had all the arrogance of his race ; and, being dissatisfied with the judgment, he refused, point-blank, to accept it, or to give La Trémouille the conventional "embrace" of reconciliation. Condé reminded him sharply that he was wanting in respect to Monsieur, and an angry altercation followed. Rieux accused the Prince of favouring La Trémouille's claim ; Condé rejoined that he had had every intention of doing so ; and Rieux received this answer with a contemptuous wave of the hand. Condé had suffered considerably from the events of the day before, and neither his nerves nor his temper were under even ordinary control ; at this crowning insult, he flew upon Rieux, and cuffed him soundly. Rieux's action, judged by the standards of the time, was even more unpardonable. He returned the blow, striking the Prince on the shoulder, and then made as though to draw his sword ; Condé closed with him ; but, at this point, they were separated by the horrified spectators, and Rieux was placed under arrest. Monsieur, instead of asserting his authority, had withdrawn hurriedly, at the first sign of combat. So heinous was the crime of having actually struck the First Prince of the Blood, and of having done so under the very roof of 'a son of France', that, in spite of the provocation he had received, Rieux was universally looked on as the chief offender. By Monsieur's order, he was forthwith committed to the Bastille ; while Condé's household, for the most part, marvelled at the generosity of His Highness, whom a latent sense of justice caused to make efforts for his enemy's early release. Lenet showed more perception than the rest when he wrote, briefly and frankly, to the Prince : "Point de compliment sur l'affaire de M. de Rieux". Condé himself was half ashamed of the incident, and half inclined to treat it as a joke : "You see a man who has been beaten for the first time", he announced to Mademoiselle, on their next meeting. Rieux was soon at liberty ; but the scandal caused by the affray lasted far longer than his imprisonment. The counsellor Omer Talon expressed the opinion of all classes when he wrote that he was 'utterly confounded by such an occurrence' ; and that

though, in itself, it had only been caused by ' the heat of two fierce and impetuous spirits ', yet he could not but consider it as ' an evil portent for the future '.¹


Mazarin, informed by confidential agents, marked each stage of the Princes' loss of power. Early in August he determined, after weeks of fruitless negotiation, on a bold and decisive step; one which, while outwardly allowing his enemies to triumph, yet in reality did more than overt opposition to weaken their cause. He accepted a sentence of dismissal, pronounced, at his own instigation, by the King, in answer to the request of the Parliament of Pontoise; and withdrew from the Court, travelling, by slow stages, towards the German frontier. His banishment, as he pointed out to the King and Queen, need be no more than temporary; while, as a diplomatic stroke, it would secure them two notable advantages. In the first place, the one common aim shared by the Princes, the Parliament, and the people, would be definitely disposed of; in the second place, the rebels, if they continued hostilities, must acknowledge themselves to be making war on their King, and on him alone. The cry of " Vive le Roi ! et point de Mazarin ! " would be robbed of all significance. Mazarin states his own motives clearly, in a letter written on August 4th, to Raulin, one of his agents: " If the question of my banishment is the strongest weapon of the Princes, it rests only with me to disarm them, and I have no great difficulty in making the resolve; more especially since the Spaniards are bent on prolonging the disorders in this country, so as to pursue their own advantage elsewhere. My withdrawal will check their designs; either by at once establishing peace all over France, or by promoting a general coalition against M. le Prince " ²

The Cardinal's policy alternated, as in the earlier stages of the Fronde, between two courses: that of conciliating the Prince—a hard task, however resolutely undertaken; and that of forming some such ' general coalition ',—than which few matters were easier. There were still moments when the former course was strongly advocated. " I hold that an agreement with M. le Prince is to be preferred above all things, since it will put an end to disturbance throughout the kingdom ", so Mazarin wrote to Le Tellier, when the Prince's foreign

¹ Talon, *Mémoires*.

² *Correspondance de Mazarin*.

allies seemed about to fulfil their promises—"To obtain such a blessing, I think we shall do well to let ourselves be cheated on some points".¹ If, on the other hand, "nothing can be done with M. le Prince", the only hope is to isolate him; "no endeavour must be spared to separate him from Monsieur". The whole question, in Mazarin's opinion, turned upon whether the Prince was actuated by a sincere wish to be at peace with the Crown; or whether the negotiations were merely to provide him with a threat, to hold over the heads of his Spanish allies. Condé's actual feelings did not, as far as can be judged, reach either of these two extremes. He would have preferred peace, if made on his own terms, to a continuation of the war; he even undertook to countenance Mazarin's return, if this step would assure him the conditions he asked, for himself, for his friends, and for the King of Spain, to whom he was bound; but he would fight to the death, sooner than accept an agreement dictated by the Cardinal. Neither the persuasions of Madame de Châtillon, nor his own inherent distaste for rebellion, availed against this resolve. The King, swayed by his natural inclinations, as well as by his mother's influence, showed no eagerness to conciliate any rebel, from M. le Prince downwards. On August 22nd, when Mazarin was safely on the road to Bouillon, the Princes volunteered to lay down their arms, if the King, in return, would grant an amnesty to his subjects, and send his troops back to the frontier. Louis consented to publish an amnesty (August 25th), and gave the Princes three days in which to consider its acceptance; but he refused to receive the emissaries whom they would have sent to treat in their name, and the letter of expostulation sent by M. le Prince was not even read; the King's message was simply to the effect that "it was no time for treating, but for submission". Condé had no thought of humbling himself; he imposed his will upon Monsieur, and the amnesty was refused. The condition which Mazarin opposed most strenuously, of all those named by the Princes, was that which demanded absolute power for them to conclude a treaty between France and Spain;² the Cardinal's foreign

 ¹ September 19, 1652.

² Among other conditions were: that the Princes and all their followers should resume whatever official posts they had held before the war; that Nemours should be made Governor of Auvergne; that La Rochefoucauld

policy was his strongest point, and he foresaw ruin, if such a matter were to be left in the hands of Condé and of Gaston. He represents forcibly to Le Tellier the necessity of checking Condé's dealings with other powers, and especially with England; where as they both knew well, the Prince's agents had been for some months secretly at work. "It is of the first importance that we should conclude a treaty with the English, lest they declare for the Prince; for there can be no doubt that he is using every means to win them, nor that, in his present rage, he would have recourse even to the Turks, if he thought they could serve him"! ¹

Meanwhile Condé's followers made merry over the Cardinal's journey, and sang:

"Pélérin, beau pèlerin,
Remettez-vous en chemin".

The Prince himself summed up the situation to Gramont, from whom he had few secrets, in a letter entirely characteristic of the man who "lived without fixed (political) design, from one day to another",² and whose personal inclinations were more to him than any affairs of state. Gramont could only maintain his neutral attitude by self-imposed banishment from Paris, and it was many months since they had met: "I think", wrote the Prince, "that our friendship is too old, and too close, for us to live as we do now, and not feel great grief". Nothing can be spoken of with certainty for the future; "but", he continues, "in spite of everything, I try to amuse myself, and not to be more bored than is needful. I do not know if we shall have peace; if we do, you must make ready to come here, without delay, or else I shall set out to fetch you from Bidache. You know how I wish to see you—I have never wished it so much—but we have to do with a pilgrim who will only retire and parry, who ruins everyone, and will end by ruining himself. I beg of you to show this letter to no one, but to keep it for yourself". That the private friendship of which Condé speaks had not suffered, is shown, not only by the tone of the correspondence, but also by the fact that Gramont's eldest

should be granted a brevet of "duc et pair", together with a large sum of money, and the Governorship of Saintonge, or of Angoumois; and that Marsin should be a Marshal of France.

¹ Mazarin to Le Tellier, August 31.

² Lenet; see Chapter XI.

son, the young Comte de Guiche,¹ was often a guest at the Hôtel de Condé. "I cannot help telling you", the letter concludes, "that M. de Guiche is full of intelligence, that he is exactly like you to look at, and that I think you will be satisfied with him in every way".²

Condé, rightly or wrongly, left the chief management of negotiations to Rohan and Chavigny; his own attention was given, by preference, to the movements of the Royalist army outside Paris. The Court, still pursuing a nomadic existence, was temporarily established at Nantes; while Turenne's forces were encamped on the banks of the Oise.

The army of the Princes was in no state to take the offensive; the day of St. Antoine had reduced their strength by hundreds; and illness and desertions had wrought havoc among them in the time since spent under the walls of Paris. But Condé and his allies, when they rejected the King's amnesty, were not depending solely on this force of less than four thousand men. Duke Charles, regardless of his latest promise, had renewed alliance with the Princes, and was marching to their support from the frontier. His army was further strengthened by a German contingent, under Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg, the ally of Spain. Condé, receiving these tidings, joined his own troops at Villejuif on September 5th; and on the following day, effected a junction with the Duke, a few miles to the southwest of Paris, at Limeil. Turenne had meanwhile advanced across the Marne, and was occupying a strong position at Villeneuve, on the Seine. Had the direction of the campaign rested with Condé alone, there can be scarcely a doubt that he would have attacked Turenne with as little delay as possible; but it was one matter to join forces with the Duke, and another to persuade him to action. In a skirmish which took place on September 7th, the Prince found himself indifferently supported, and the enemy secured an important line of communication across the Seine. Some open remonstrance seems to have followed; since Caillet, writing five days later, expresses the belief that 'a

¹ Armand de Gramont, Comte de Guiche; afterwards a brilliant courtier, and well known for his romantic attachment to Henriette, Duchesse d'Orléans.

² A.C., August 24, 1652.

reconciliation ' between the Duke and M. le Prince is about to take place ; and that, if so much can be achieved, all will go well.¹ In spite of this sanguine forecast, no definite result was obtained. Days passed, and the allies, instead of carrying the enemy's position by assault, fell back on the less vigorous design of cutting off all supplies from the camp of Villeneuve, in the hope of starving the Royalists from their post.

Condé was forced to curb his impatience ; while the Duke, securely independent, visited Paris, and made burlesque apologies to Mademoiselle for his former desertion. On his return to camp, he insisted that she should accompany him, to inspect the troops ; he sent word to the Prince to prepare for her entertainment, reminding him, in particular, to see to the provisions, "for the way is long enough to give the ladies an appetite".² Mademoiselle accepted willingly ; never happier than when she could gratify her military tastes. Her only precaution was that of filling every seat in her coach with a guest of her own choosing ; and in this she succeeded so well that when, as was expected, Madame de Châtillon asked to be of the party, there was no difficulty in presenting an excuse. Rumour had been busy, of late, coupling Mademoiselle's name with that of the Prince ; the news that Madame la Princesse was seriously ill, had been enough for the gossips of the Luxembourg, who set about appointing her successor. Chavigny had not scrupled to speak openly on the subject : " We are talking of the poor Princess's illness, and of remarrying M. le Prince ", he said, on one occasion, with such significance that Mademoiselle could not hide her confusion. As a rule, however, she supported hints of this kind with equanimity. Her nature was not sensitive ; and Condé, both as a man and as a Prince, pleased her far better than any of the foreign suitors assigned to her. The day spent in his camp, she describes with the keenest enjoyment. On her arrival, M. le Prince came out to meet her, with three hundred of the cavalry of Lorraine, resplendent in steel cuirasses ; the Prince himself, to the amazement of all beholders, ' fort ajusté ' in his buff coat, blue scarf, and white linen collar. That he should make any effort whatever at personal adorn-

¹ B.N., Caillet to Lenet, September 12, 1652.

² A.C., September 18.

ment, was so unwonted that his guests complimented him, with one voice, on his appearance ; he excused himself for it, 'as though for a crime', saying that the foreign officers had complained of his usual equipment, and had pronounced it unworthy of his rank. The Duke's suggestions for the preparation of a feast, proved to have been admirably carried out. The only untoward incident that occurred was when, during dinner, Mademoiselle disclosed the fact that Madame de Châtillon had wished to join them ; and Condé, thinking that the name had been introduced to mock him, made, for an instant, 'une terrible mine' ; but the cloud soon passed, and was forgotten. Turenne had been warned of the Princess's visit, and had sent a message to the effect that all hostilities should be suspended while she was present ; so that she was able to ride in safety through the whole camp. She even wished to visit the enemy as well ; and persisted in this intention until Condé rode up, and turned her horse back by the bridle ; an arbitrary measure, which she would certainly have resented from any less privileged person. It was moonlight before her inspection was completed ; her departure was attended with much ceremony, and the Prince, as a final compliment, asked her to choose the pass-words for that night and the next. Mademoiselle's imagination did not soar above the obvious ; she chose for the first night, 'Saint Louis' and 'Paris' ; for the second, 'Sainte Anne' (her own patron saint) and 'Orleans'. Condé rallied her on this second choice : "I knew you would name that saint, before all the others in Paradise", he said ; "and that town, before all others in France. If I ever make war against you, and if I only need the countersign for two days, I shall pass everywhere, you may be sure".¹

Mademoiselle drove back to Paris in high spirits, little thinking that she had played a leading part for the last time in a military pageant. The days of the Prince's party were numbered ; only a complete victory over the Royalist forces could have saved their cause. Mazarin's departure had produced the expected result, and the signs of a loyal reaction were daily growing more marked. The hostility of the Parisians towards the Lorrainers was no longer controlled ; Duke Charles himself, on one of his visits to the city, narrowly escaped

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

death at the hands of the mob. As the allied army still hesitated, and as Turenne, helped by stray convoys which escaped the enemy, seemed to have no thought of yielding, the Cardinal's letters of instruction took a more confident tone ; he urged less conciliation towards M. le Prince, and more towards his fellow-rebels ; the King's anxiety to show mercy to the great mass of his subjects was to be insisted on. Condé was to be isolated ; and, to achieve this end, little was needed, save to offer pardon, on easy terms, to the other leaders of the party ; no ties of honour, or of friendship, held the last remnants of the Fronde together. Mazarin's policy served him well ; but he was further helped by a circumstance which even he had not foreseen. In the latter part of September, the question of an attack on Turenne was finally disposed of, by Condé falling ill, once more, and being forced to relinquish his command. He came to Paris on the morning of September 25th, intending to return to his post the same day. The main object of his visit was to investigate a charge made against Chavigny, of treating secretly, on Monsieur's behalf, with the Court ; and a stormy interview took place at the Luxembourg, nearly ending in an open breach between the two Princes. " You would never have come into Paris, but for me ", Gaston had the effrontery to declare. " That is as may be ", Condé retorted ; " but, if you gave me Paris, I gave you fifteen thousand men to hold it ". Monsieur protested that he himself had furnished troops, and summoned the Duke of Lorraine : " Your troops are very few ", answered the Prince, " and as for M. de Lorraine, it was only out of regard for me that he ever left Brussels. But I see how it is ; you wish us to separate, and each one to decide on a course for himself ! " ¹ Later in the day, a reconciliation was effected ; but the excitement of the quarrel seems to have acted as a finishing touch. Condé, leaving the Palace, was met by Mademoiselle, who asked him, gaily, if she should see him at a reception that was being given, in her honour, by the Comtesse de Choisy ; in answer, he told her that he was " almost dead with a headache ", and could not go back to camp, still less take part in an entertainment. Mademoiselle, disappointed by his refusal, had curiosity enough to send, later, to the Hôtel de Condé,

¹ B.N., Marigny to Lenet, September 29, 1652.

and assure herself that the excuse was genuine ; the result satisfied her, for she learnt that M. le Prince had taken to his bed.¹ More than a fortnight passed before he was able to take the field again ; a space of time he could ill afford to lose. Turenne had noted that his enemies were not making use of their advantage ; and the news that Condé had left the camp gave him still greater assurance. He seized his opportunity on the night of October 4th ; threw a bridge of boats across the Seine ; and next day retreated in safety upon Corbeil.

Condé's illness did not incline him to leniency ; no excuses could alter his opinion that the Royalists could, and ought to, have been attacked and routed as they withdrew from Villeneuve ; he knew the superiority of his own side in numbers, and, till that moment, had confidently hoped for victory. " Send bridles for Tavannes and Valon ", he said, " they are no better than asses ! " ² Towards Tavannes, in particular, he showed himself so merciless, that the Count, for the first time, wavered in his allegiance. The method which the Prince had long employed, in dealing with his followers, never served him worse than at this crisis. If they failed in duty, he was harsh almost beyond bearing ; if—as was sometimes unavoidable—he could not fulfil the demands for favours made upon him, he disappointed their hopes without the smallest compunction ; and, in no case, would he brook their resentment. " If you want to sulk, go and do it elsewhere ! " ³ he was believed to have said to Chavagnac, for all apology, after some offence. Chavagnac departed, obediently, but returned no more. So terrible, by all accounts, was the wrath of M. le Prince, on occasion, that the death of Chavigny, which occurred in the moment of his disfavour, was attributed, more or less directly, to the treatment he received, on presenting himself at the Hôtel de Condé. He came, in all ignorance of the charge made against him, to discuss the latest answers from the Court ; and the Prince, though still unable to leave his bed, turned on him in a frenzy of anger, with unmeasured reproaches and abuse. Chavigny withdrew, entirely overcome ; on returning to his own house, he was seized by a fever,

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² *Ibid.*

³ Chavagnac, *Mémoires*.

which must have been latent in his system, but which the shock, no doubt, did much to aggravate. He died after a few days' illness; thereby taking a more effective revenge than any he could have devised for himself; his long adherence to the House of Condé was well known, and the ingratitude and heartlessness of M. le Prince were blamed on all sides. That an agent should seek protection in certain independent negotiations was, in the prevailing state of politics, scarcely more than natural; a more disinterested, or more capable emissary than Chavigny, was not likely to be soon forthcoming.¹ Condé, hearing of his extremity, felt some remorse; and, being himself convalescent, went in person to visit the dying man. It was too late to offer reparation, for Chavigny was already unconscious. His family gained what consolation they might from seeing the Prince give unmistakable signs of grief; but it was afterwards reported that, as he left the room, he made no other comment than, "Il est laid en diable".²

That same day (October 11th) an elaborate 'fête'—music, supper, and a comedy—was given by the Comtesse de Fiesque, lady-in-waiting to Mademoiselle. Condé was present; and the fact strengthened the impression of his unfeelingness, although he was clearly in no festive humour. Mademoiselle observed him, morose, haggard, and deplorably unkempt, refusing to eat, drink, or be amused. When the time came for the comedy, he took a seat behind hers, in the place of one of the officers of her household, saying: "I will be Captain of the Guard to Mademoiselle; I am old, and ill; I am not going to show myself, and prove my right to wear a hat in this company". Madame de Fiesque could only lament the failure of her efforts. Duke Charles, who was also a guest, appeared, for once, scarcely more genial than the Prince; and the verdict passed on the entertainment was "that there had never been a prettier fête, nor one which gave less enjoyment".³

¹ La Rochefoucauld suggests that Chavigny acted on orders given by the Prince, and subsequently denied by him, for reasons of policy. But this grave charge against Condé may be said to be disproved by Marigny's confidential letter to Lenet (B.N., September 29, 1652), which states clearly that the Prince was ignorant of Chavigny's proceedings.

² Motteville, *Mémoires*.

³ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

Conjecture was just then at its height, with regard to the futures of Mademoiselle and M. le Prince. On September 20th, Madame la Princesse had given birth to a son ; the lives of both mother and child had, at one time, been despaired of ; and, though the Princess had rallied, her recovery seemed more than doubtful. The first news of the event had reached Paris when Condé was prostrated by illness ; Mademoiselle sent him her formal congratulations on the birth of a Prince ; and received, in answer, a somewhat curt message that " there was no cause for rejoicing, as the child could not live ". M. le Prince acknowledged Lenet's announcement in the course of a long and characteristic dispatch ; which, since he was too ill to write himself, he dictated to Guitaut. After detailed instructions, to be transmitted to Marsin, for the payment and provisioning of the troops in Guyenne ; after many comments on the political situation in Bordeaux, and a recommendation to Conti to " pay more attention than is his habit to such affairs ", there follows, at length : " I heard the news of my wife's confinement with joy ; which would be complete if she were in better health, and her child more likely to live ; I entreat her to be careful of herself ". Directions are given that the godparents of the little Prince are to be " my sister, and the representatives of the town ". " As for his title, I think he should be called the Duc de Bourbon,¹ according to your advice, and that of all my friends ; as for his Christian name, I wish it to be Louis ; and since, in the war of Paris, my sister gave the name of Paris to the little Comte de St. Paul, I think we should do well, in this case, to add the name of Bordeaux ".² Louis-Bordeaux, Duc de Bourbon, lived seven months in possession of his honours.³ Madame la Princesse, by slow degrees, struggled back to comparative health ; and the cold-blooded speculations of her contemporaries were perforce at an end.

During his illness and convalescence, Condé had reviewed his position, and had come finally to a momentous resolve. " He decided ", in the words of

¹ The bestowal of this title was an act of defiance ; Henri II of Condé had ceded it to the Royal branch, in exchange for the dukedom of Albret.

² B.N., September 30, 1652.

³ " V(otre) A(ltesse) recevra par cet ordinaire une fort fascheuse nouvelle, puisque nous avons perdu M. le duc de Bourbon " (A.C., Lenet to Condé, April, 1653).

one of his most intimate friends and followers, "to throw himself into the arms of the Spaniards, rather than trust his fortunes to a Minister whose ill-will towards him was well known".¹ On the day following Madame de Fiesque's reception, it was known that M. le Prince was leaving Paris forthwith; and, with what troops remained to him, would either take up his winter quarters on the Oise, or retreat to join the Spanish forces on the northern frontier. This withdrawal, explain it as they might, was equivalent to an admission that the Princes were abandoning their hold on Paris. They could no longer conceal from themselves, or from their followers, the fact that the King would only need to appear before the city gates, to receive a loyal welcome. Monsieur, left to himself, asked nothing better to do than to tender his submission; he was tired of rebellion, of his wife's tears, and Retz's political discourses; more than all, of Condé's tyranny. In his private negotiations with the Court, he had declared himself willing, and even anxious, to detach his interests from those of the Prince. If Mazarin's letters are to be believed, Condé, for his part, had repeatedly threatened to 'planter là Son Altesse Royale'—as he said—and retire to Spain, or to the Spanish camp;² and now that the design was to be actually carried out, Monsieur was probably more conscious of relief than of any other feeling. Condé seems to have been actuated partly by pride, partly by over-confidence in his Spanish allies; partly also, it was affirmed, by a wish to emulate the Duke of Lorraine, whose position, half Prince, half adventurer, at the head of an independent army, appealed strongly to his tastes.³ This landless sovereign, gifted, as a soldier, with only moderate talents, could make monarchs wait upon his pleasure; M. le Prince may well have thought that what was easy for a Duke of Lorraine, should not be impossible for a Prince of Condé.

No word passed between the Princes to the effect that their separation was likely to be final. Monsieur, needless to say, found no difficulty in promising that he would refuse any agreement with the Court which did not include M. le Prince. Condé carried the matter

¹ Henri de la Trémouille, Prince de Tarente, *Mémoires*.

² Mazarin to Le Tellier, August 23.

³ La Rochefoucauld, *Mémoires*.

through with a high hand ; he made his farewells lightly, professing himself entirely satisfied with His Royal Highness's assurances, and foretelling a speedy return. " We must try and do something noteworthy, while the fine weather lasts ", he said to Mademoiselle ; " then when we have put the troops into winter quarters, we will come back to amuse ourselves. We have had trouble enough ; we must have pleasure soon ".¹ Mademoiselle kept a vivid impression of the scene of the Prince's departure ; the broad walk in the Tuileries gardens, thronged with brilliantly-clad figures—" for it was the season when new clothes were first worn for the winter " ; Condé in " a very fine grey coat, embroidered in scarlet, gold, silver, and black ", with the blue scarf of the party worn across, ' à l'allemande '. He and Duke Charles took their leave of the Princess together ; she confesses that she wept to think how dull and lonely life would seem, when they were gone. She had indeed good reason for tears ; no one stood more deeply committed as a rebel than this heroine of Orleans and of St. Antoine, who was now left practically defenceless, while the King's triumphant return to his capital was anticipated on every side. From Monsieur, she had nothing to hope ; he was bent solely on exonerating himself in the eyes of the Court, and felt no shame at casting off his daughter, after making use of her courage and energy on occasions when his own had failed him. Three or four days later, Mademoiselle was assured, beyond all doubt, that His Royal Highness had treated secretly with the Court, and had made terms for himself, without reference to any other member of the party. As a last resort, she went herself to the Luxembourg, and demanded an explanation ; Monsieur answered that he was not responsible to her for any measures he chose to take ; that she had ignored his advice, and that he no longer wished to hear anything of her affairs. She might go where she liked ; he himself, with the rest of his family, was leaving the Luxembourg, at the Royal command, for the Castle of Blois, but he forbade her to accompany them. The King was at St. Germain, making preparations for his entry into Paris ; Mademoiselle had already received a notice to vacate her lodging in the Tuileries, and was forced to throw herself on the hospitality of private

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

friends. For some days she was actually in hiding, sheltered by a relation of one of her ladies ; then, as soon as the journey could be arranged, she travelled, in disguise, to her own castle of St. Fargeau, a long-deserted residence in Anjou, where she spent many dreary months of exile.

Condé had not been mistaken when he prophesied, at Montrond, that he would be ' the last to sheathe the sword '. Seven years were to pass before Paris received him again ; years which he spent fighting as the enemy of France, and which some of his countrymen have wished to see blotted out altogether from his career. Yet it may safely be said that, from most points of view, the Prince's reputation suffers less in the Spanish war than in the degrading and self-seeking struggles of the Fronde. The record of these years is one of failure and misfortune—deserved, indeed, but none the less disheartening ; and, to meet these reverses, Condé summoned to his aid the full strength of his higher qualities ; proving, by degrees, his courage in adversity as well as in danger. It was the history of the Netherlands campaigns, from the close of the Fronde to the battle of the Dunes, which justified St. Évremond in writing as he did of the Prince's military fame : " Pour M. le Prince victorieux, le plus grand éclat de la gloire ; pour M. le Prince malheureux, jamais de honte ! " ¹ When Condé set out for the Spanish camp, the truth of the first statement had long since been established ; that of the second, was soon to be proved.

¹ Parallèle entre M. le Prince et le Vicomte de Turenne.

CHAPTER XIX

THE SPANISH ALLIANCE

1652-1654

THE first six weeks that passed after Condé's departure from Paris gave him greater promise of success than was ever destined to be fulfilled. With Duke Charles, he joined the troops near Senlis, on October 14th; and from thence marched northwards, to where Fuensaldagna¹ awaited him at Crécy-sur-Serre. From the first, the French and Spanish commanders seem to have felt a strong mutual antipathy; the coldness with which they greeted each other was noted by their followers as a bad omen for the future. Fuensaldagna's natural instinct, as well as his instructions from the Spanish Government, disposed him to see lions in the way, and he offered steady opposition to the suggestion, made by M. le Prince, that they should begin operations by securing the frontier towns of Picardy. After much discussion the scheme was abandoned; but Condé, thwarted in one direction, turned his efforts against the fortresses of Champagne. With little help from his Spanish allies, he seized, in rapid succession, Rethel, Ste. Ménéhould, Bar-le-Duc, and some half-dozen smaller places, thus providing a base of operations for a campaign on the Aisne. Turenne, on whom depended all hope of checking the enemy's progress, could not forsake the neighbourhood of Paris till he had seen the King safely within the walls of the capital, and some degree of public order restored; but the loyal acclamations which greeted the entry of the Court

¹ Alonzo Perez de Vivero, Count of Fuensaldagna, served Philip IV of Spain both as a General and as a diplomat. One of his subordinates, the Baron de Woerden, describes him as '*homme d'une extrême probité, froid, pas communicatif, mais dont l'amitié, une fois donnée, ne se démentait pas*'.

(October 21st) left no doubt as to the temper of the citizens. Ten days later the Royalist forces left their quarters at Compiègne and marched for the eastern frontier, halting at Vitry-le-François. Here, tidings met them of the fall of Bar-le-Duc, after a fortnight's siege; Rethel, a still more important stronghold, had capitulated, at the first summons, on October 30th; and Ste. Ménéhould, after some resistance, on November 13th. Turenne had hoped to save Bar-le-Duc; he was cheered, however, by information that the Spanish army was no longer supporting M. le Prince in Champagne, and that therefore, in the case of a general action, the Royalists would not find themselves outnumbered. Their forces were insignificant compared to the united strength of the Spaniards, the Lorrainers, and the rebel French, and Turenne had not set forth on the campaign with any expectation of defeating his enemies in the open field; but before leaving Paris he had told the King, with characteristic diffidence, that "he hoped at least to prevent M. le Prince from taking up his winter quarters on the French side of the frontier".

Condé received early warning of Turenne's march from Compiègne, as well as of other important events; he had left, in Paris, several of his more obscure adherents, who could keep him informed without drawing attention to themselves. From them he learned of the King's return, and of a new amnesty offered to all Princes who would tender their submission within three days from that date; of Monsieur's banishment, notwithstanding his submission, and of how Beaufort had shared his fate; while Retz was reported to be expending himself in efforts to win favour at Court. News came, also, of Mademoiselle's forlorn condition, and the Prince wrote, in his own name and that of his allies, to offer her shelter in any one of their fortresses; but though she found some consolation in the letter, the risks of such a position were too great even for her adventurous spirit. During the siege of Ste. Ménéhould a final proof was given of Monsieur's eagerness to prove his loyalty to the King; an officer arrived from Paris, with orders from His Royal Highness to the regiments bearing the titles of the House of Orleans,¹

¹ Each Prince of the Blood exercised special rights over certain regiments raised in his name, and partly maintained by him. During the war,

that they were to withdraw immediately from the Prince's service. The same officer was charged with a special message to Condé, by which Monsieur advised him to profit by his example, and to return to their rightful allegiance, instead of "favouring the pernicious designs of the Spaniards". "Pray thank Monsieur for his good counsel", answered the Prince, "and tell him that, as I and my friends are well aware of how the King has treated him, we will indeed profit by his example".¹ The troops in question were actively engaged in the siege, and, while it lasted, the officers flatly refused to leave their posts. On the day that the terms of the capitulation were signed (November 16th), the greater number bade farewell to M. le Prince 'with all the regret imaginable', and prepared to leave the camp. One regiment, however, had been raised in the name of Mademoiselle, and among its officers was a certain Comte de Hollac, a German by birth, who held himself responsible to her alone. "Go and join His Royal Highness, since you belong to him";—he said to the rest, when the troops were drawn up in marching order, "I shall stay here, and so will the companies of 'Mademoiselle'". With these words, he marched back into camp at the head of his men, and was promptly followed by a second regiment, whose commanding officer excused himself to the messenger, saying that he felt able to be of more use to the Prince than to Monsieur.² Mademoiselle was subsequently commanded by her father to recall Hollac, and her sense of filial duty still prevailed so far that an order was written and dispatched; but Hollac interpreted the spirit rather than the letter, and firmly, though respectfully, declined to obey the summons.

The capitulation of Bar-le-Duc was swiftly followed by the fall of three lesser fortresses: Ligny, Void, and Commerçy; but Turenne was bent on fulfilling his word to the King, and the tide of fortune was soon to turn against Condé. He had experienced Fuensaldagna's powers of passive resistance, and he now learned that opposition was also to be looked for from the Archduke Leopold, who still held the post of Viceroy of the Nether-

additional regiments had been raised by the Princes, and were also called by their names. Tavannes speaks of Monsieur's troops as four regiments of infantry and eight of cavalry.

¹ Tavannes, *Mémoires*.

² Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

lands. The Spaniards had not failed to profit by the late disturbances in France ; during the four years that had passed since the campaign of Lens, they had won back Dunkirk, Mardyck, and Gravelines. In the treaty signed by Condé with Philip IV of Spain, it was agreed that all places won by the allies in Flanders, or on the seaboard, should be yielded to His Catholic Majesty, while those on French territory inland were to be left in the hands of the Prince ; an obviously injudicious arrangement, which could only result in a division of interests. The Archduke's aim was to strengthen Spanish possessions along the coast ; he was well aware that Condé, if allowed a free hand as Commander-in-Chief, might soon create such a position for himself as would enable him to defy their agreement, and to treat independently with France. Fuensaldagna, deliberate by nature, and steeped in the conventions of the Spanish army, was admirably fitted to carry out the Viceroy's designs ; his opinion of Condé's energetic methods was expressed in the proverb, which he was heard to quote concerning him, to the effect that the ' señor principe ' knew how to ride a borrowed horse.¹ Immediately after the capitulation of Ste. Ménéhould, the Spanish forces were withdrawn, by the Archduke's order, into Flanders. Condé, even though supported by the army of Lorraine, was not prepared for a general action ; Fuensaldagna's withdrawal had left him with scarcely any infantry at his disposal ; and the troops that remained to him had been for many months on active service, insufficiently paid and fed. Disputes were rife among his officers, most of whom felt themselves at liberty to quit the army on the smallest provocation ; even Tavannes, after patiently enduring many hard words from the Prince, resigned his commission sooner than serve second to La Trémouille. Turenne, reinforced by troops from Picardy, and knowing well the condition of his enemy's forces, pressed him hard. The Prince, contrary to his wont, was anxious to avoid a pitched battle ; he retreated along the frontier, seeking an advantageous position, but finding none, and before a hard winter put an end to the campaign, he was driven beyond French territory across the borders of Luxembourg.

Turenne had been as good as his word ; but his

¹ Choisy, *Mémoires*.

labours were not yet ended. Further reinforcements were at hand, drawn from the fortresses of the German frontier; and at their head, despite his aversion to warlike enterprises, was Mazarin himself. It was thus that the Cardinal took the first step towards his return to Paris. Once in camp, he was fired by the most unlooked-for zeal; Turenne could not content him until three fortresses—Bar-le-Duc, Ligny, and Château-Porcien—had been wrested from the enemy. Condé, failing to relieve Bar-le-Duc, marched once more across the frontier, and seized Vervins; which fortress was, however, retaken by Turenne a few weeks later. Then, at length, when this last exploit was accomplished, Mazarin felt that the time had come when he might enter Paris with safety. The Fronde was crushed out of existence. Retz, its last representative, had been arrested, despite all his efforts at conciliation, and was now safely lodged at Vincennes. In the first days of February, the young King joyfully received his Minister; for both, a moment of triumph almost unalloyed. Those friends of Condé who were still in Paris, could only console themselves by jeering at the martial airs assumed by the Cardinal since his late achievements. "He has brought back moustaches twisted up to his ears", wrote Marigny; "he thinks he has made the greatest campaign that ever was known, and one which will entirely destroy the reputation of M. le Prince".¹

While the allied troops occupied their winter quarters in Luxembourg, Condé retired to his own fortress of Stenay, where he was forced to take several weeks of complete rest. Ill-health was not the least difficulty he had to contend with during his years of exile, and the strain of the past months had told on him severely. The reports sent by his followers, from different parts of the country, did little to cheer his seclusion. From Paris came news of humiliations which, however confidently anticipated, had lost none of their power to wound. No pains were spared to emphasise the fact that the First Prince of the Blood was to be looked on, henceforward, as a traitor and an outcast. His property had been seized, and occupants appointed by the King had taken possession of his castles. Chantilly was overrun by the Royalist troops, who sacked the gardens, and destroyed the collection of foreign birds in the Prince's

¹ B.N., February, 1653, Marigny to Lenet.

aviaries ; one of Lenet's correspondents mentions ' a pelican, the only one of its kind in France ', among the victims. Defections, more serious in practical effect than such lawless depredations, were reported from Bordeaux ; Conti, by persistent and scandalous disregard of public opinion, had lost all authority, and the citizens were rapidly tending towards loyal submission. A detailed impression of Condé's state of mind, and of his relations with his allies, in these early stages of his exile, may be found in a letter addressed to Mazarin by a certain Père Léon, a confidential agent in Paris. An obscure French officer of the allied army, ' tired of serving the wrong side, and disappointed of promotion ', had deserted from the camp, sought out Père Léon, and given him information at first-hand. Condé, according to this authority, was preparing to make himself master of the frontier by the ' *mi-carême* ' (March, 1653), and would then advance upon Paris with a powerful army ; maintaining, when he spoke of this design, " that he would cause men, one day, to show the place where Paris had stood ". " Those who encourage this idea, and who do the most harm, are best received by him ", the letter continues, " whatever their station may be. He speaks seldom of the King, and with a fair show of respect ; but he makes mention constantly, even in public, of his great and acknowledged enmity to the Queen, and above all, of his devouring hatred towards the Parisians, since the time when he left them ; as also towards MM. de Bar, Navailles, and others. He makes game of the Ministers, and declares that he will be revenged on them ". The imprisonment of Retz, it is added, gave Condé great satisfaction ; " he boasts of having foretold it to him before leaving Paris ". The Spanish officers, and those of Lorraine, are said to ' treat M. le Prince with great respect ', and only one among them—spoken of as the Comte de Lenneville¹—is supposed to be in his confidence. The Prince is " well pleased when French officers leave him ; he seems to fear having them about him ; and rightly, considering the dangers to which he is exposed " ; this refers, apparently, to various rumoured plots for his assassination. " He keeps no state at table, but comes and goes as he pleases. His

¹ The name should probably be Ligniville ; the Comte de Ligniville was a Lieutenant-General in the army of Lorraine.

greatest expenditure is in the payment of spies, whom he sends in every direction. He is in no want of money, and says himself that the Duke of Lorraine has lent him 400,000 francs ; but this last fact is doubted by many. Nothing passes, either at Court, in Paris, or in the army, that is not speedily reported to M. le Prince by his spies ; four of his valets serve him in this way " ;¹ then follow, in conclusion, the names of these men, and of places where they might be waylaid on their travels.

Many of the feelings attributed to Condé, by Père Léon's informant, were no doubt genuine enough. His invincible respect for ' la personne du Roi ', his hatred of the Queen, and his fury against the Parisians, were all alike well known and characteristic. That he was suspicious of any French officers who were not personally known to him may have been true ; and he certainly affected indifference, or contempt, towards those who quitted his service. " The life they are obliged to lead in this country ", he wrote, " has frightened most men of quality so much, that they have left me ".² But he was still closely surrounded by a small band of his countrymen, the friends of earlier days ; La Trémouille, Guitaut, Jarzé, and some others, were his constant associates. Boutteville was detained at Bellegarde by his duties as Governor, but when, after a heroic defence, he was compelled to yield the town to a Royalist force (June, 1653), he made haste to join the Prince, who received him with open arms. The impression that Condé was well supplied with money can only have been conveyed by sheer bravado ; his letters to Lenet show him to have been on the verge of destitution, and there is no reason to suppose that the Duke's loan was any more to be relied on than his other promises. The difficulty of raising funds alternates, as a subject of complaint, in the Prince's correspondence, with the inefficiency of the Spanish troops, and the duplicity of their officers, as well as of the authorities in Madrid ; " who ", he wrathfully declares, " have alike failed me at every crisis, although the Count (Fuensaldagna) promised me a thousand times that I should be supported. I had a clear proof of their incompetence, or of their ill-will, before Bar-le-Duc, where the Cardinal himself was engaged. If they had

¹ * *A.E.*, December, 1652.

² * *B.N.*, Condé to Lenet, December 3, 1652.

held to their word, I might have carried all before me. . . . Their policy is merely to keep me occupied, and to study their own advantage ; as to mine, they are completely indifferent. But I will not be deceived by them ; I protest as much, every day, and neither my humour, nor my interests, incline me to bear with them, if no effort is made to maintain these troops. . . . I am willing to be of service to them ; but they shall treat me as the head of a powerful party, and not merely as a General in their pay ". This last phrase would seem to be not much more than a figure of speech : " They owe me more than 500,000 crowns, besides what should be paid to you (Lenet) at Bordeaux. I am left without a penny, in the most forlorn state you can imagine ".¹ To La Trémöille, who had raised troops at his own private expense, Condé wrote in apology for offering such scanty remuneration : " I am ashamed to have no more than 3000 ' patagons ' to offer you ; but when you consider the payment I have received, compared to the sums I have given to the troops, and the little that remains to me for my own establishment—which is not only unpretending, but scarcely decent—you will allow that I can do no more ".²

Lenet, by the Prince's orders, melted down plate, and sold jewels, to supply the needs of the family. He had little consolation to offer, of either a public or private nature. " The news of my second son's illness is causing me great distress ", wrote M. le Prince, in answer to later tidings. " I have had no letters on the subject from M. le Breton " (the doctor in attendance) ; " tell him to write to me fully, and to give me his opinion. I leave it to you to see that nothing is spared for the child's recovery. If the plague continues at Bordeaux, my elder son must leave off attending the College ; but he is not to discontinue his studies on that account. Let my wife know that I am much concerned to hear of her illness ". The Princess was allowed no voice as to the disposal of her jewels. " My wife will make no difficulties ; but, in case she should do so, I send an order to Madame de Tourville " (her lady-in-waiting), " who will place them all in your hand ".³ On other personal matters, however, it must be admitted that

¹ * B.N., December 26, 1652.

² La Trémöille, Prince de Tarente, *Mémoires*.

³ B.N., April 17, 1653.

the Prince showed no want of consideration ; the terms in which he first proposes a reduction of his wife's establishment would not have disgraced a far more affectionate husband. " You (Lenet) might even suggest to my wife, if she should happen to have too many maids in attendance, that she might dispense with a few of them, merely during this time of need ; but it should be done without vexing, or urging, her ; and you must give assurance, in my name, to all who are dismissed, that I will reinstate them as soon as these troubles are past ".¹ Further, he upholds the Princess's authority, in his own absence, on questions connected with the Duc d'Enghien. Some attempt had apparently been made by the Duke's tutor, the Comte d'Auteuil, to take advantage of the situation, and to conduct a separate establishment on lines of his own ; but the suggestion was promptly scouted by M. le Prince, who pronounced it ' extremely ridiculous ' that the child's household should be ordered ' as though he were twenty-five years old '.² " My son is to live with my wife ", was his decree ; " M. d'Auteuil, so long as he is with them, is simply to do his duty, and not to take upon himself the direction of my son's household, in which I wish my wife alone to be mistress ".³ D'Auteuil probably deserved the rebuke ; but it seems evident that the Princess, at this time, was scarcely capable of carrying out such a charge. Lenet's next letter announces the death of the Duc de Bourbon, and records no improvement in the health of Madame la Princesse. " Pray tell me, without subterfuge, the nature of my wife's illness ", Condé wrote, soon afterwards ; " and tell me, also, the doctor's opinion of her, so that I may know what I ought to hope ; I beg of you to relieve me of my present anxiety ".⁴ This was not the first time that the Prince had asked for such information ; his tone seems to point to an element of mystery, which, in view of later events, it is impossible to ignore.

By the end of March, Condé had left Stenay, and was making active preparations for the coming campaign. The design, reported by Père Léon, of reducing the whole frontier to submission by the ' mi-carême ', cannot have been seriously contemplated after Fuen-saldagna's withdrawal, and the loss of Bar-le-Duc ; it

¹ * B.N., May 14, 1653.

² * B.N., Condé to Lenet, May 14, 1653.

³ * B.N., Condé to Lenet, May 31, 1653.

⁴ B.N., May 3, 1653.

would have been impossible, under such circumstances, to continue operations throughout the winter. The Prince was resolved not to embark on a fresh campaign without having exacted a personal promise of support from the Archduke Leopold ; and a formal meeting was arranged to take place, towards the end of April, at Brussels. Condé's followers awaited the result of this first interview with some trepidation. They knew that M. le Prince was entirely dependent upon the Spanish Government for the means of maintaining his present position ; they knew, also, that he was indignant at the treatment he had received, and most unlikely to approach the Archduke in a conciliatory spirit. The preliminaries to the meeting were highly unpromising. Condé was delayed, on his journey to Brussels, by a brief, but violent, attack of illness, from which he had by no means recovered when messengers arrived, sent by the Archduke, to discuss the eternal question of precedence. Would M. le Prince, they asked, consent to give place to His Imperial Highness in the coming ceremonies ? Several minor advantages were offered in exchange for this concession. Condé answered without hesitation ; " more proudly ", to quote a writer of the time, " than in the days of his greatest prosperity ".¹ " I am a Prince of the Blood of France ", he said, " and, in that capacity, the utmost I can allow is that there should be equality between myself and the Archduke ; son and brother of an Emperor as he is. You can decide the matter as you please ; but if, within twelve hours, my offer is not accepted, I shall leave the country ". In justice to the Prince it must be added that the feeling which prompted these words was not mere self-importance ; it was, in part at least, a sense of responsibility towards the race of Bourbon, represented in his person ; a race whose dignity, as he conceived it, was perhaps the only thing he could be said to hold sacred. The Archduke had hitherto shown himself scarcely less tenacious in such matters ; but, on this occasion, as Condé's early biographer records with a burst of patriotism, " the pride of Austria trembled and gave way before the firmness of France ! " ² In other words, Condé, penni-

¹ Père Bergier, *La Vie et les Actions de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé*.

² Désormeaux, *Histoire de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé*.

less and discredited, was still too valuable an ally to be dispensed with ; he must be curbed, but not estranged ; and the Archduke, believing him capable of acting on his threat, agreed to waive the claims of Imperial rank. Two or three days later, the Prince, though still weak, was able to continue his journey ; a state coach was sent to convey him, and he was met outside the gates of Brussels, by all the chief nobles of the country, who formed an escort. " The citizens received him with more enthusiasm than I can describe ", wrote Caillet triumphantly ; " the Archduke came out to greet him, and paid him a thousand compliments. His Highness was given the right hand place on all occasions, and when they exchange visits they meet on equal terms ".¹

Condé's hopes were revived by the prospects which the Government at Brussels laid before him. The possibilities of a peace treaty had been suggested to him, even as late as December, 1652, by the indefatigable Princess Palatine ; but though he persisted in the declaration that, provided his own terms were accepted, he was ' by no means irreconcilable ' with the French Government, it is evident that his strongest feeling, at this time, was the desire for revenge.² The forces which the Archduke could now place at his disposal seemed to promise him swift satisfaction. Five army corps were reported ready to take the field. Of these, the first was to be commanded by Condé himself, the four remaining, by Fuensaldagna, Clinchamp, the Spanish General Garcies, and the Comte de Guise ; Duke Charles, tired of active service, had appointed the last named, as a Prince of his own House, to command the troops of Lorraine. The total strength of the allies was estimated by the Prince at close on thirty thousand men. This powerful army was to advance across the frontier in two main divisions ; one following the valley of the Oise, the other, that of the Aisne. A junction was to be effected north of the Aisne, and the whole force, mighty enough to overcome all resistance, would then advance upon Paris. Condé wrote

¹ B.N., Caillet to Lenet, May 3.

² ' Au nom de Dieu, desabusés vous tous, une fois pour toutes, sur cela ' (the question of peace) ' et n'envisagés jamais d'accommodement que comme chose fort éloignée, car toutes les fois que vous vous flaterés, et que vous laissés flater les autres de certe esperance, c'est le moyen de ruiner nos affaires ' (B.N., Condé to Lenet, December 3, 1652).

confidently of opening the campaign at the end of May ; he had yet to learn what the joint capacities of the Archduke, Fuensaldagna, and the Duke of Lorraine could accomplish in the way of delays. June passed, and half July, and still no definite offensive movement had been made. The reluctance of the Spanish Government to sanction any plan of campaign which was likely to result in personal advantage to the Prince was displayed, not by declared opposition, but by a series of petty excuses for inaction, which were even less easy to meet. The Lorrainers, for their part, held to the custom of refusing to march without direct orders from their Duke ; and few things were more difficult than to obtain a prompt or decided answer from Duke Charles on any subject. To what straits Condé found himself reduced may be judged from the tone of the letter which he addressed, at this time, to Cromwell, and in which he does violence to the strongest instincts and principles of his race. This letter was written at the special instigation of Barrière, the Prince's agent in London. Cromwell had almost reached the zenith of his power ; a few months were still to pass before he assumed the title of Lord Protector, but the dissolution of the Long Parliament (April, 1653) had left him an absolute ruler in all but name. Condé had already sent offers of alliance and requests for support, but in terms which Barrière judged unsuitable. " It would be most advisable ", he wrote to the Prince, " that Your Highness should write to him (Cromwell) to congratulate him on what has lately taken place, but the letter should be differently expressed. Your Highness must consider him as the ruler of England ".¹ Barrière undertakes that the letter shall be seen by no one, except the person to whom it is addressed ; but he insists that it shall show perception of the fact that " M. de Cromwell is the most powerful man in Europe ". Thus urged, Condé abandoned the tone which had proved successful with the Archduke, and expressed himself in terms which he had certainly never thought to use towards the descendant of Cambridgeshire squires ; concluding, after fervent congratulations : " I implore you to place entire faith in whatever the Sieur de Barrière tells you on my behalf, and to make a prompt decision, favourable to my interests. I shall never lose

¹ A.C., May 23.

the sense of my obligations towards you".¹ The humiliation was in vain ; for, in Cromwell's opinion, a Prince who had managed his own affairs so ill was scarcely likely to be worth assistance.²

Turenne took instant advantage of his enemies' hesitation. He had noted the strategical importance of Rethel, as the key to the valley of the Aisne ; a post whence, as he says, " M. le Prince could hold open a line of communication with the Spanish Netherlands, on the one hand, and with Luxembourg on the other ".³ Siege was laid to Rethel ; Persan, the Governor, capitulated after a few days' resistance, but secured favourable terms for himself and his garrison, and was able to join the Prince at St. Hubert, in the Ardennes. Condé still held Ste. Ménéhould and Clermont, but Turenne had gained an important point ; with Rethel as a base of operations, he could force the allies to abandon the scheme of an advance along the valley of the Aisne ; he could even, when necessary, cut off supplies from the invading force, and check the Prince's advance, without meeting him in the field. Years of warfare had devastated the frontier provinces, and no sustenance for an army could be drawn from them ; Turenne, strong in the belief that, without supplies, the allies would find it impossible to continue their march, encamped his troops at Ribemont, and resisted all suggestions made by his officers as to barring the road to Paris. The Royalist, or, as it should now rather be called, the French, army numbered not more than seventeen thousand in all ; if invasion was to be checked, it must be by strategy rather than by force.

Late in July, after delays that seemed endless, the allied troops assembled at La Capelle. Condé knew that his supplies would be endangered ; but, devoured by eagerness to march upon Paris, he decided still to rely on convoys ; especially as it seemed that Turenne might, at any moment, leave the road from the frontier comparatively clear, by abandoning his camp at Ribemont, and attempting to bar the invaders' advance.

¹ A copy of this letter is preserved among the MSS. in the British Museum.

² Burnet (*History of Own Times*) asserts that Condé offered to embrace the Huguenot religion and to lead a Protestant party in France ; but there is no trace of such a suggestion in this letter, or in any of Barrière's correspondence.

³ Turenne, *Mémoires*.

The Marshal, however, adhered firmly to his preconceived plan. A council of war was held in the French camp, in presence of the King himself, who had been conducted by Mazarin to make a personal inspection of the army ; and the Cardinal, entirely convinced by Turenne, caused his design to be approved, in spite of the many opinions that were given in favour of more aggressive measures. In the last days of July, Condé marched from La Capelle, crossed the river Somme, and advanced as far as Roye ; which town, defended only by its citizens, surrendered after two days' resistance (August 5th). But Turenne's wisdom was soon to be proved. The allied army had barely reached Roye, when Fuensaldagna's cautious disposition asserted itself in full force. A large convoy of provisions was reported as having lately set out from Cambrai, and, until he should be assured of its safety, he refused absolutely to continue the march. The Prince could no longer intimidate his allies as he had done three months earlier, by threats of instant withdrawal ; they knew that he was too destitute of friends, and too far bent on vengeance against his countrymen, to carry such words into effect. His wrath and his arguments were alike unavailing ; to both, the Spanish General opposed a blank wall of obstinacy and indifference, such as no French officer had ever succeeded in presenting to M. le Prince. While the Spaniards hesitated, Turenne, needless to say, had also received news of the convoy. He had left Ribemont some days earlier, and the allies half suspected him of intending to dispute their passage across the Oise ; but now, keeping his first aim ever in view, he turned northwards again, and drove back the convoy to within the walls of Cambrai.

Fuensaldagna, hearing that his supplies were thus definitely cut off, would neither advance into the enemy's country, nor wait longer at Roye. Five days' march only lay between Roye and Paris. Condé declared himself confident that the troops could hold out, but all such assertions were in vain ; sorely against his will, he was forced to retrace his steps towards the frontier. He still hoped to dispose finally of Turenne's resistance by meeting him in the field ; but here, again, the Spanish General's precautions blocked the way. Turenne, having successfully turned back the convoy, and believing that the allies were falling back upon

Péronne, halted north of that fortress ; his cavalry encamped near the foot of a steep hill, the Mont St. Quentin ; the infantry, under La Ferté, a few miles away, near the village of Manancourt. Early on the morning of August 13th, the Marshal set out to reconnoitre, towards Péronne, but found no trace of the enemy. Condé, instead of following the expected route, had ordered Tarente to make a night march, with an advance guard of cavalry, from Bray, on the Somme, by Bapaume, to surprise La Ferté at Manancourt. Tarente, recording this fact, adds that the slowness of the Spaniards was a perpetual hindrance on any march, and that M. le Prince himself was forced to take up a place with the rearguard, for the sole purpose of hastening them on. Turenne, returning from his reconnaissance, found the camp at Mont St. Quentin thrown into disorder by the arrival of La Ferté's infantry, who reported that the Spaniards were coming up in force, and had already attacked their outposts. La Trémouille had indeed reached the outskirts of the woods which surrounded Manancourt, but was waiting to engage the enemy until he should be joined by the infantry of the rearguard. Turenne's presence at once checked the confusion in the French camp. He drew up his troops in order of battle ; choosing a position flanked, on the right, by a small tributary of the Somme, running through a deep ravine, and on the left, by the upward slope of a hillside, too steep to admit of any attack from that quarter. Fuensaldagna, little influenced by Condé's desperate urging, came up some hours later ; only to pronounce that it was too late to attack that day, and that, after their long march in the heat, rest was essential, for himself and for his men. The idea that a General should pause for his ' siesta ', when every moment was precious, was as new as it was distasteful to Condé ; of whom his followers said that, once he was fairly engrossed in any matter, ' he seemed to have no body ', so little did he regard its claims.¹ Fuensaldagna, however, was not to be moved ; although the Prince, driven to entreaties, begged him " only to hold his troops in battle order, facing the right (La Ferté's) wing, and he (Condé) would give a good account of the rest ".² The attack was, perforce, postponed till

¹ Père Bergier, *Actions mémorables du Prince de Condé*.

² La Trémouille, Prince de Tarente, *Mémoires*.

next day. Turenne, as Condé had foreseen, immediately set his men to work on redoubts and entrenchments; with such good result that, by the next morning, his position, naturally strong, had been made practically unassailable.

Three days passed in ineffectual skirmishing, before Condé, baffled and furious, drew off, with the whole allied force, towards the town of St. Quentin. While the two armies were thus facing each other, personal intercourse between the French officers in the two camps seems to have been countenanced to a curious extent; rebels and loyal subjects mingling together, without safe-conduct, but with perfect confidence in a mutual code of honour. Even the Prince, attended only by his Captain of the Guard, and a single esquire, came out from the camp, and received many of Turenne's officers. One man only, on either side, seems to have found such proceedings irregular. Puységur, who had never swerved from the King's cause, but whose private friendship and admiration for Condé were well known, tells how some of his brother-officers pressed him to come with them and visit M. le Prince; and how he refused, saying that "although he wished greatly to have the honour and pleasure of seeing His Highness, yet he should feel himself to have failed in duty, if he met him, thus unprotected, and made no effort to take him prisoner". "In the time of the late Cardinal Richelieu", he adds, "anyone who let such a chance go by him would have done himself an ill turn".¹

The opportunity lost at Mont St. Quentin was not likely to recur, in dealing with such an adversary as Turenne. This campaign, which had seemed to promise such great things, was to pass, for Condé, in fruitless and exhausting efforts to stimulate the Spaniards to action, to conciliate the Lorrainers, and to cope with the genius of his adversary; a combined task beyond almost any human power. One check succeeded another; Fuensaldagna was manifestly unwilling either to pursue invasion, or to engage in a general action. Not the least cause of vexation to the Prince, during these humiliating dissensions, was the thought of how his own military reputation must suffer, and of how Turenne, whose good opinion, on this point, he valued more than that of any man living, must be marvelling

¹ Puységur, *Mémoires*.

at such lack of enterprise. Turenne, however, knew better than to hold him responsible. "If the Spaniards had listened to M. le Prince", he assures Mazarin, in the course of correspondence, "then matters would have fallen out differently".¹ The strained relations between the allied commanders were soon a subject of common knowledge; although pride, as well as military etiquette, forbade Condé to admit to his friends in the French service, that he had been definitely overruled.

Before the end of August, Fuensaldagna had openly signified his resentment by withdrawing his troops, once more, across the frontier, while Condé was preparing to lay siege to Rocroy, the scene of his earliest triumph. The investment of the town was scarcely begun when news reached him of yet another reverse of fortune; Lenet wrote to inform him that the loyal submission of Guyenne, long anticipated, was now an accomplished fact. The Duc de Vendôme, representing the King's authority, had made a state entry into Bordeaux and had been welcomed by the repentant citizens. The rebel leaders were scattered far and wide; Lenet himself was making ready to bring Madame la Princesse and the Duc d'Enghien, by sea, to join the Prince in Flanders. Madame de Longueville had bowed to the Royal command, and had withdrawn, under her husband's protection, to one of his feudal castles; while Conti had brought on himself the contempt of friends and enemies alike, by making an independent peace, greatly to his own temporal advantage, with Mazarin. Condé made every effort to hide his grief and anger at the news that his brother was actually a suitor for the hand of one—any one—of the Cardinal's nieces; but those who knew him were well aware that he was "more mortified by this knowledge, than he had been by any disgrace that had yet fallen upon him".²

Turenne had attained his chief object when the allied army turned back from Roye; he had checked invasion, and had once more saved the King from a pressing danger. He now left Rocroy to its fate, and profited by the fact that Condé's forces were engaged in the siege to invest Mouzon; while the more important fortress of Ste. Ménéhould, lately won by the allies, was threatened by French reinforcements, no longer

¹ *A.E.*, Turenne to Mazarin, August 19, 1653.

² La Trémouille, *Mémoires*.

needed in Guyenne, and marching northwards with all speed. Fresh difficulties were arising in the allied camp; the Lorrainers, having failed to receive orders from their Duke, refused to march either to the siege of Rocroy, or to the defence of Ste. Ménéhould. Condé invested Rocroy with what troops were left to him, but he could direct no further operations, being seized with 'a quartan fever'; "of which", says La Trémouille, "the attacks were so long, and so severe, that he was forced to keep his bed during the whole time of the siege". Matters were not improved by the arrival on the scene of the Archduke, in person; for no other reason, apparently, than to assert his right to claim a share in the command; he brought no force of any serious dimensions, and his presence was a perpetual source of trivial disputes. La Trémouille, on whom Condé's command devolved, during his illness, found the task of executing his military duties, without transgressing rules of etiquette and precedence, too hard to be borne. He did his utmost, in the three weeks that the siege lasted; he superintended all operations, quieted disagreements, and withheld the Archduke's messages on days when the Prince was too ill to attend to them; but his powers of devotion had reached a limit. The allies entered Rocroy on October 4th, and the Archduke, to the general relief, returned to Brussels; a few days later, La Trémouille visited Condé, who was not yet even convalescent, and, with many regrets, and protestations of fidelity, resigned his post; asking leave to retire from the army, "sooner than see the troops perish in his charge", for want of pay and of proper supplies.¹ He undertook to make no terms with the Court, but still to serve His Highness, by attempting to raise funds, or by acting as an emissary, whenever his services might be needed. Condé, chastened by illness and misfortune, made no reproaches in this case, but admitted that he was justified; telling him frankly that, for the present, he saw no hope of improved fortunes. Their farewells are described by La Trémouille as 'fort tendres', and their mutual friendship appears to have undergone no change.

The Prince was detained for several weeks at Rocroy; suffering, not only bodily illness, but much anguish of mind. Mouzon had surrendered on September 28th,

¹ La Trémouille, *Mémoires*.

and Turenne was free to support Navailles ; who, with the reinforcements from Guyenne, and some additional troops dispatched from the King's household, was already laying siege to Ste. Ménéhould. The Comte de Montal,¹ Governor of the town, was making a stubborn defence, but his stores were running low, and he could not hold out indefinitely. Condé's letters, at this time, grow desperate. He was completely debarred from action of any sort, for the recurrent fever left him prostrate from weakness ; his own troops could ill be spared from their present position at Rocroy, and neither Spaniards nor Lorrainers seemed prepared to take any measures for Montal's relief. Lenet, soon after his arrival from Bordeaux, was dispatched on a special mission to urge the Archduke and Fuensaldagna to make some movement which would divert Turenne's forces ; but though he obeyed the Prince's orders to 'faire de furieuses plaintes', and though many assurances were given, no practical result followed. "I am kept in fearful anxiety by this fine 'relief of Ste. Ménéhould', which drags by the way, and comes to nothing",² wrote Condé, by the hand of Caillet, on November 6th. Supplies were failing on all hands ; the artillery, which might have advanced from Rocroy, to assist the relief, was useless, for want of horses, and proper equipment. A later dispatch to Lenet, also dictated, bears a postscript, written, as the manuscript testifies, by the Prince himself, with evident effort, and a shaking hand : "Ste. Ménéhould se deffend à merveille, mais le secours va lentement, cela est horrible cependent, envoiés les chevaus pour les canons".³ Nothing availed ; the day after this message was penned, Montal, having used the last of his ammunition, and seeing no hope of relief, was forced to capitulate. He had done all that was possible, under the circumstances, even to securing fairly advantageous terms for himself and his garrison ; and when after a month's defence, he marched out of Ste. Ménéhould, with the regiment of 'Condé infanterie', and took his way to Rocroy, he was received with the honour that he

¹ Charles de Montsaulnin, Comte de Montal ; born 1620 ; fought under Condé at Nördlingen, and was noted for his courage, and his fidelity to the Prince ; Mademoiselle calls him 'le plus brave homme qui se puisse'.

² * B.N., Condé to Lenet, November 6, 1653.

³ * B.N., November 26, Condé to Lenet.

deserved. The campaign closed with the fall of Ste. Ménéhould ; winter was drawing on, and no inclination was shown, on either side, for further enterprise. The French were left in possession of three important conquests ; Rethel, Mouzon, and Ste. Ménéhould ; to say nothing of the triumph of having checked invasion. Even Turenne, in his *Memoirs*, cannot refrain from the satisfaction of observing that " the enemy had only taken Rocroy ; although there could be no comparison, in numbers, between their army and that of the King, theirs being so far the greater of the two ".

The submission of Guyenne had one solitary advantage, from Condé's point of view, in that, by concentrating his interests in one place, it restored some of his most valued followers to his immediate service. Marsin, a true soldier of fortune, offered his services, on leaving Bordeaux, to the King of Spain, and to Cromwell, in turn ; but soon returned to his old allegiance, and found himself warmly greeted by Condé, who was in no position to resent a moment's defection. Viole, also, was once more at hand, and could be relied on for skill and secrecy in negotiations. Lenet, escorting Madame la Princesse, had landed at Dunkirk on August 26th, and had been employed on the mission already referred to ; while the Princess and the little Duke, after some delay, travelled to Valenciennes, where they were ceremoniously received by the Archduke. The Duc d'Enghien's arrival in the Netherlands gave the Prince an opportunity, of which he at once availed himself, of asserting his parental rights. As a husband, he was still flagrantly neglectful ; months passed before he even visited the Princess at Valenciennes ; but as a father, he showed unremitting personal care and affection. Lenet was ordered, without reference to Madame la Princesse, to bring M. le Duc to Rocroy ; where Condé, as he slowly recovered from his illness, found his son's company unexpectedly agreeable. ' Henri-Louis ', as he was arbitrarily called, his second name of ' Jules '¹ having been suppressed for obvious reasons, was now ten years old, and possessed of considerable intelligence, which the strange surroundings of his childhood had no doubt helped to develop. Accustomed to be made much of in the Princess's household, he was not in the least afraid of his father, and on their meeting, as Lenet

¹ The Duc d'Enghien was the godson of Mazarin.

bears witness, 'lui prodigua mille gentilleses'. Their intercourse was soon on as familiar a footing as the custom of the time allowed. Henri-Louis had inherited a gift of ridicule which he already knew how to turn to good account; he had not been long at Rocroy before he procured the dismissal of his 'gouverneur', the Comte d'Auteuil, by successfully making game of him, before the Prince. Condé, however, was himself far too ardent a scholar to let his son escape from study. When, towards the end of December, he was able to leave Rocroy, he conducted the Duke to Namur, and there, following the family tradition, had him formally enrolled as a pupil at the Jesuit College; with a private lodging and establishment, the best that could be provided. That Henri-Louis enjoyed no undue advantages from his rank, in school hours, is evident from the letter, written a few weeks later, in which he apologises, almost pathetically, to the Prince, for not having taken a higher place in class. He encloses a moral essay, in French and in Latin; "at which", he says, "I worked as hard as I could, both to please you and to gain a better place; but I have only been moved up three places, on account of one mistake in it, which you will see, Monsieur, if you take the trouble to read my essay; I will try and do better in future".¹ D'Auteuil's successor writes, at the same time: "As Your Highness wishes that M. le Duc should write to you in his own words, and that no one should interfere with him on this point, his letter was composed entirely by himself, without assistance of any kind".

Madame la Princesse, meanwhile, was treated with due consideration at Valenciennes, but her time was spent mostly in solitude; she had neither the gift of attracting friends, nor the money wherewith to entertain them. The Prince allowed her a certain fixed sum, for necessary expenses; but, in the existing state of his finances, it was impossible for him to maintain separate establishments for his wife and son, without practising strict economy in both. He complains bitterly of the 'bêtise' of a certain La Tour, who acted as his treasurer, and who had omitted to deduct the proper amount from the Princess's allowance, when M. le Duc was withdrawn from her charge.² For some months it seemed possible that Madame la

¹ A.C., March, 1654.

² * B.N., November 6, 1653.

Princesse, acting independently of her husband, might obtain leave from the King to take shelter in France, and a petition, in her name, was drawn up for the purpose. Condé approved the scheme; provided it were clearly understood that the Duc d'Enghien's name was not to be included in the petition. On that point, there must be no question. Henri-Louis was to continue his studies at Namur, within reach of his father's frequent visits; he was too valuable a possession to be exposed to the dangers of a journey into the enemy's country. Some question of claiming a family inheritance seems also to have been involved; but, in this instance, not even the traditional rapacity of the House of Condé could prevail. "I would rather let such a sum be lost", wrote the Prince, "than risk my son's person. As for my wife, I think it would be well for her to accept a passport, and to return to France, since there can be no danger in her case".¹

All such instructions proved needless; the petition was returned by the King, unread. It was no time for granting favours which might in any way benefit the rebel Prince. The conviction of 'lèse-majesté' which had been pronounced against him in November, 1652, was now, after more than a year had passed in the accomplishment of legal formalities, to be further confirmed, with all ceremony. Between January and March, 1654, the form of a State trial was elaborately gone through, notwithstanding the absence of the accused; Parliament was summoned, the King presided in person, and an array of Princes and Peers of France—amongst whom Gramont unwillingly played a part—appeared as judges. In this assembly, 'Louis de Bourbon, Prince of Condé, First Prince of the Blood', was condemned to death, with a solemnity which was made almost ludicrous by the obvious impossibility of carrying the sentence into effect. The chief adherents of the Prince were condemned at the same time, and several of their number were hung in effigy, by order, on the Place de Grève. Condé was spared this last indignity. It may be that the King thought such degradation too great to be imposed on any kinsman of his own; or it may be that he recalled Lens and Rocroy; and, having seen the inconstancy of his subjects, feared the result, if they too should remember.

¹ A.C., Condé to Lenet, January, 1654.

CHAPTER XX

CONDÉ AND TURENNE

1654-1656

THE winter of 1653-54 passed, for Condé and his allies, in dispute and recrimination over the lodging of their troops; so that the new campaigning season found relations between them even more strained than in the preceding year. The frontier provinces, wasted by fire and sword, could by no possibility yield shelter for an army of thirty thousand men; even when the territory of such neighbouring rulers as the Elector of Cologne, and the Prince-Bishop of Liège, had been requisitioned, there was still ample ground for disagreement. "As for the compliments which the Comte de Fuensaldagna pays you", wrote Condé to Lenet, in this connection, "if he says again that he wishes to live on good terms with me, tell him that it is a bad beginning to refuse the one thing I ask of him. . . . The way in which the Spaniards behave towards me shows that they have no longer any need of my services. I am resolved, if they [the quarters asked for] are not granted me, to disband my troops, and to act for myself".¹ The Archduke was disposed to conciliation, but the Duke of Lorraine, who respected no landmarks, had also to be reckoned with. Condé writes, a few weeks later, that M. de Lorraine holds him and the Spaniards 'le pied sur la gorge', by his perpetual 'chicaneries' and his extraordinary gift for creating difficulties; "but if he thinks", the Prince continues, "that, as soon as the enemy makes an advance, I shall leave my quarters at Liège, and that he will come in after me, I can tell him that he will get no room from me, and that, if he plunders my territory, I shall do the same in his".² The close of this same letter shows, by an abrupt transi-

¹ * B.N., December 13, 1653.

² B.N., February 8, 1654.

tion of subject, that not even Duke Charles, or Fuensaldagna, could occupy Condé's mind to the exclusion of all else: "I have almost finished Livy; send me the second volume, and I will send back the first, as soon as I have read it all. I have not received the Spanish book which you say you sent me". The Prince little knew, as he wrote, how soon he might be free from the tyranny of Lorraine. In the early months of 1654, Fuensaldagna received information that Duke Charles was about to accomplish yet another act of treachery, by transferring his troops to the service of France. On such a point as this, the Spanish General could act readily enough. He notified the authorities at Madrid, and, scarcely awaiting their reply, caused the Duke to be arbitrarily arrested at Brussels. The whole design was carried out with great promptness and decision. Within a few days, Duke Charles had been transported to Toledo, as a prisoner of state; Ligniville, whom the recent death of Guise had left in command of the Lorraine troops, had been won over by bribes and threats; and Duke François, brother of the captive, had arrived in camp, proclaiming his alliance with Spain.

The intercourse between Condé and Fuensaldagna was not placed on a more friendly footing by the removal of Duke Charles. To the antagonism of their professional methods there was now added the recollection of more than one personal affront, given and returned. The Count had sinned unpardonably against conventions by showing no assiduity in inquiring after the Prince during his illness before Rocroy; even Turenne, enemy though he was, in name, had been far more solicitous. "I humbly beg of you", wrote the Marshal, "to let one of your household give the bearer of this letter some news of your health, since it is a matter in which I feel great concern, and I am, in all respect and sincerity, Monsieur",¹ etc. etc. A long dispatch, dated April 17th, and addressed by the Prince to the Comte de Fiesque,² his representative in Madrid, gives a fair idea of the attitude of the allied commanders towards each other. The document seems to bristle with indignation: "All my letters, since the month of August last, have shown you what just cause I have to complain of the Comte de Fuensaldagna. Matters have grown worse

¹ * *A.C.*, October, 1653.

² *A.C.*

every day, and I am obliged to tell you all that has passed lately, so that you may see that no remedy can be looked for here, and that it can only come from where you are " (*i.e.* by the recall of Fuensaldagna), "and whatever may be written from here of our reconciliation, believe nothing but what I tell you myself". Many pages of indictment follow. Condé had demanded a meeting with the Count, that he might bring him to some decision as to the localisation of the troops, and also as to a plan of campaign for the coming season. Fuensaldagna had put forward one pretext after another for delaying the interview; till at length, lest a fresh excuse should be found, Condé presented himself without warning, and gave vent to his wrath. He required "present fulfilment of all the promises that had been made, and of which not one had been kept; in particular, that of payment for the troops; for want of which", he declared, "both officers and men are without coats to their backs; so that the greater number of them have deserted, and gone back to France". Fuensaldagna listened, imperturbable as ever, to these demands, and also to vehement protests against the agreements which had been made with the rulers of Liège and Cologne, without the Prince's consent; only observing that, in future he would avoid breaking his word by making no promises to M. le Prince, on any subject. With regard to the coming campaign, he declared himself unable, for the present, to pledge himself to any course of action, whether offensive or defensive. "Let me know when you come to a decision", returned Condé, taking refuge in sarcasm, "so that I may make preparations accordingly; or, if you are quite resolved to do nothing, that I may buy castanets, and dance all the summer, to pass the time". As a parting shot, he warned the Count that he should hold him responsible for any disaster that resulted from the want of collaboration between them; and then withdrew, to send his complaints to the Archduke and to Fiesque. "Since that time", he adds, writing to the latter, "I have had fever again; this is my seventh day of illness, and he (Fuensaldagna) has sent no inquiries. He was four days at Namur without condescending to visit my son, who is there; altogether, his behaviour towards me is uncivil to the last degree".¹ The formalities of the time did indeed,

¹ A.C., April 17, 1654.

unlikely as it may seem, require that Fuensaldagna should find time to pay M. le Duc a ceremonious visit ; and the Prince was not likely to overlook an insult conveyed through the medium of his son.

This letter, in which Condé lays bare all the humiliations of his position, was destined never to reach Madrid. The messenger who bore it was intercepted, near Bayonne ; his dispatches were carried to Gramont, who, as in duty bound, sent them to the King ; and Condé, before long, was driven to imagine how such revelations would gratify the eyes of Mazarin.

Fortunately for their enemies, the French had likewise been prevented from opening the campaign as early as the season allowed. Turenne's presence was held necessary at the King's coronation, which took place at Rheims, towards the end of May ; and which was also attended by a large number of the troops. When the ceremonies were over, Louis proceeded to Sedan, in order to watch the progress of the war without too great risk to himself ; Turenne assembled the greater part of his forces on the frontiers of Champagne ; while Fabert, Governor of Sedan, was ordered to undertake the siege of Stenay. This fortress was one of the three¹ which had been granted to the House of Condé in the year 1647, as a special favour, by the Crown. Condé's first wish was to march to its relief, but neither Spaniards nor Lorrainers were prepared to support him, since neither had any special interest at stake ; the Spanish Government, however, was so far influenced by the Prince's letters, and by the representations of the Comte de Fiesque, as to offer the towns of La Capelle and Le Catelet by way of compensation. Seeing that Stenay must be lost, Condé advocated the siege of Arras, as an alternative enterprise, and carried his point with the Archduke ; although Fuensaldagna, shrinking from an undertaking on so large a scale, proposed, instead, the siege of two lesser places, Béthune and La Bassée. Turenne, hearing that the enemy were marching on Arras, confessed himself astonished ; he had begun to take for granted that Fuensaldagna's counsels would prevail, rather than those of M. le Prince ; and his knowledge of Fuensaldagna's methods had led him to predict the siege of Béthune, and of La Bassée, with the utmost confidence.

Arras, the scene, some fourteen years earlier, of

¹ Clermont-en-Argonne, Jametz, and Stenay.

Condé's 'premières armes', was invested by the allies on July 3rd. Thirty thousand men surrounded the town; their lines were crossed at two points by the river Scarpe, which flows east and west, past the northern walls. The section of investment to the north was occupied by Spaniards, horse and foot, under the direct orders of Fuensaldagna; to the north-west were Italian mercenaries, under a Spanish officer, Don Fernando de Solis.¹ The Lorrainers occupied the south-western section; due south were the French troops, under Condé, and the German mercenaries of Wurtemberg; to the east, reaching to the southern bank of the Scarpe, the Archduke's headquarters. The Spaniards, for once, had been urged into haste, and had executed their march upon Arras so swiftly that the Governor, Montdejeu, was taken completely unawares. Part of the garrison had been sent out to guard the roads to Béthune and La Bassée; but, before the investment was fairly accomplished, a cavalry force, eight or nine hundred strong, detached by Turenne, gallantly fought a way through the enemy's lines by night. Nearly half their number were lost; but the surviving five hundred were joyfully received into the town. Even so, the garrison was barely adequate, in numbers, for defence against a powerful besieging force; Montdejeu, however, trusted in the strength of the fortifications, and in the certainty that Turenne would make every effort for the relief.

The allies were no less assured than the Governor of Arras that they would not long be left to carry on the siege undisturbed. Their camps were soon strongly entrenched, on the side farthest from the town, to guard against the approach of a relieving force; no small labour, since the zone of investment—marked by a trench twelve feet wide—measured over twenty miles in circumference. The nature of these defences is given in the memoirs of the time: "an outer covered trench, five or six feet deep, by eight or nine wide; between this trench and that of the actual line (or zone of investment) a space four or five yards wide, honey-combed with pits three or four feet deep".² Between these pits were "small palisades, not more than a foot and a half in height, to obstruct the way for horses".

¹ Governor of Mardyck in 1646; see Chapter VIII.

² Turenne, *Mémoires*.

The siege trenches were opened on the night of July 14th to 15th. Condé and Fuensaldagna had disagreed, needless to say, over the points to be chosen for assault on the town, and the Archduke, fearing to gratify M. le Prince too often, arbitrated in favour of the Count ; with the result that the first attempts were repulsed with great loss. Nevertheless, the relations between the allied commanders seem to have undergone some temporary improvement, during the early days of the siege ; for, whereas all communications, of late, had been made through some third person, Condé now wrote, at frequent intervals, direct to the Count, in somewhat abrupt, but not unfriendly, terms. From this correspondence it may be learnt that the Prince still suffered returns of intermittent fever—' J'attends ma fièvre ', is given as a fact marking a particular day ; but his activity does not seem to have been materially lessened, and the work in his section was carried on under strict personal supervision. Another letter complains, in almost deprecating strain, of the Count's handwriting : " I could not read your letter, from the place I have marked with a cross, to the end. I beg of you to tell me what is in it. If I wrote any better myself, I would not reproach you ; but I think I may reproach the whole world in this matter, since I believe firmly that there is no worse hand-writing than my own ".¹ Those who have studied the *Archives of Chantilly* will admit this verdict to be not far from the truth ; the statement, made by one who knew the Prince well, that " he wrote with incredible swiftness, and considered only how to express his thoughts in a direct and simple manner ",² is easy of belief.

News of the enemy's expected advance was soon forthcoming. Turenne had at first intended to await the fall of Stenay ; but, hearing that the whole of the allied army was engaged before Arras, he decided that he might safely leave Fabert unsupported ; and marched to the relief, with fifteen thousand men. By July 20th, the French army had taken up a position at Mouchy-le-Preux, east of Arras, within five miles of the Archduke's headquarters. Mouchy stands on a height, midway between the Scarpe, on the north, and a smaller river, the Cojeul, on the south. Turenne posted the greater part of his infantry in the centre, on the height, and

¹ A.C., ' devant Arras ', 1654.

² Bergier.

the cavalry under his direct orders on the southern slope ; while La Ferté's cavalry occupied the northern slope, towards the Scarpe ; the line extending thus the whole distance between the two rivers. " The enemy can have only one of three aims in view ", Condé wrote to Fuensaldagna, when Turenne's position was reported to him—" either to attack our lines, and carry them by force ; or to advance within range and bombard us ; or to starve us out of our camp ". The same letter refers to the imminent arrival of French troops from Stenay ; the town had capitulated on August 6th, and Hocquincourt, who had superseded Fabert in the command, was bringing six thousand of the troops lately engaged in the siege to reinforce Turenne. Condé warned Fuensaldagna to ' make sure of holding Mont St. Eloi '—a height to the west of Arras, corresponding to that of Mouchy on the east ; but before the Spaniards could be roused to take action, Turenne had set forth from Mouchy with a cavalry detachment of fifteen squadrons, and had joined Hocquincourt near Bapaume. Skirting the besiegers' entrenchments on the north, the French seized St. Eloi : then, extending their march westward, gained possession of St. Pol, a small place some twenty miles distant. This done, Hocquincourt encamped at a spot known as Camp de César, not far from Mont St. Eloi, while Turenne returned to Mouchy. The news that Boutteville had successfully brought a large convoy of provisions into the allies' camp had caused the French Generals to abandon the hope of cutting off the enemy's supplies. After prolonged discussion in which Turenne overcame considerable opposition, they resolved, instead, to attack the lines ; and, with this end in view, the Marshal, on his return march, took occasion to reconnoitre the defences of the Italians' and Spaniards' camps ; passing, once or twice, within actual range of fire, and calling forth remonstrance against such rashness, from some of his officers. But, as he assured them, he knew too well the type of commander he had to deal with, and the formalities that must be observed, before a conscientious and highly-trained Spanish officer, such as Don Fernando de Solis, could venture on an attack ; how a message would be sent to Fuensaldagna, that he might inform the Archduke ; how the Archduke, in his turn, would inform M. le Prince, and summon a council of war ;

and how, long before any decision was arrived at, an enemy might make a reconnaissance, several times over, and retire in safety. "Had we been opposite the Prince's quarters", the Marshal explained, "I would never have ventured on such an imprudence". The Duke of York afterwards repeated this speech to Condé; and was told, in return, that Don Fernando, and the rest, had acted on the occasion precisely as Turenne had foreseen.¹ No consideration could triumph over the Spaniards' belief in conventions. For some days Condé urged his allies, almost unceasingly, to sally out from their lines and give battle, instead of waiting to be attacked; but all to no purpose: Fuensaldagna set his face firmly against any such unorthodox proceeding as that of voluntarily raising the siege, and insisted that, even in the case of victory, they must lose too many men to enable them to follow up their advantage by taking Arras. "Tell us, then", said the Prince, "what you mean to do when the French are surrounding the camp, and when provisions fail you". Fuensaldagna made no attempt to solve this problem, and only reiterated his first opinion; till nothing remained for Condé to do but to declare that he would be responsible for no troops except those under his direct command, and that they, at least, should do their duty.

The southern section of investment had already been reconnoitred—from a safe distance—and pronounced to be too well guarded for attack; a party, under Castelnau, venturing nearer than the Prince approved, was forced to beat a hasty retreat. It was clear that the attack must be made on the northern section, and the actual point chosen by Turenne was, as might have been expected, the camp of Don Fernando de Solis. There could be no delay; for a messenger, sent by Montdejeu through the enemy's lines, brought word that the garrison's powers of resistance were almost exhausted. Orders were sent from the King to the effect that no effort was to be spared to save the town; and, from the same quarter, came the suggestion that the attack of the Spanish lines might take place on the night of August 24th–25th—the vigil of the feast of St. Louis, the King's patron, and therefore 'a day of good augury for France'. The fact that St.

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

Louis was the patron, not only of the King, but also of M. le Prince, who might therefore hope for some share of good fortune, was apparently overlooked.

The section occupied by Don Fernando de Solis, to the north-west of Arras, lay between the 'ravin de Roclincourt'—a deep hollow running transversely to the lines—and the village of Anzin, on the Scarpe; within easy reach of Hocquincourt's forces but at some distance from Mouchy, and at the farthest point possible from the section occupied by the Prince. The meeting-place agreed upon by Turenne and Hocquincourt was on the high ground between St. Eloi and the



Spanish lines. Three feigned attacks were to be made : one on the west, opposite the Lorrainers' camp ; one on the north-east ; one on the south, opposite M. le Prince. On the evening of August 24th, just before nightfall, the forces of Turenne and La Ferté left their camp, crossed the Scarpe at Pelves, and marched, first, due north ; then, under cover of darkness, turned westwards, and arrived at the meeting-place exactly at the time appointed. The troops carried with them fascines, covered hurdles, and ladders for crossing the trenches ; the musketeers hid their lighted matches, and the march was made in dead silence. Hocquincourt's forces were late at the rendezvous ; a guide had failed

them. He was himself on the spot, protesting that they could not fail to come up immediately ; but Turenne would not delay the attack beyond the hour originally named—an hour carefully chosen between moonlight and dawn. The troops advanced, as nearly as possible, in the order already decided upon : Turenne's division in the centre ; La Ferté's on the left ; a space on the right, to be filled by Hocquincourt, as soon as his troops should appear. The attack was to be made by the infantry, who were drawn up in two lines, and supported by cavalry. They came on through the darkness, their advance favoured by a fresh breeze, which sprang up after midnight, and hid the sound of their approach. Within two hundred yards of the enemy's lines, the musketeers, at a given signal, uncovered their lighted matches, and the flames, fanned by the wind, flared up into the night ; answering lights flashed from the camp, and three shots from a cannon were fired, to give the alarm. These had scarcely sounded, when Turenne's infantry, led by the regiment which bore his name, reached the outer trench. The men, somewhat intimidated by darkness and obstacles went forward steadily, but, according to their officers' account, with less than their usual spirit, till they were encouraged by the sight of confusion among the Italians. The first volley fired from the lines was too uncertain to check the French advance ; the foremost battalion of ' Turenne ' pressed on to the second trench, and crossed it ; their captain, who led the way, planted the colour on the parapet, with a cry of ' Vive Turenne ! ' The troops next in order, encouraged by success, poured across the trench, overpowering all resistance. Don Fernando had been taken at a disadvantage, as some of his force had been detailed that night for guard-duty in other parts of the trenches. Those left in camp held their ground for a while, but were soon dispersed, and, in their flight, spread disorder in the neighbouring camps.

La Ferté, on the left, had attacked slightly later than Turenne, and without the same success ; his troops were repulsed by the Spaniards. Turning to the right, he followed Turenne's forces, and so penetrated the enemy's lines ; but his men no sooner found themselves within reach of the camp than they dispersed to plunder, in spite of their officers' attempts to rally them. Hocquincourt's troops, coming up after a brief delay,

found the French in possession of the whole length of the lines formerly occupied by Don Fernando de Solis, and joined Turenne, who was in the act of leading his cavalry across the Scarpe, to attack the Lorrainers beyond Anzin. Here, there was even less resistance to be encountered; Duke François was as well aware as his brother had been that his personal advantage depended less on victory than on the preservation of his troops. A few hours earlier, he had refused the reinforcements asked by Fuensaldagna, for the better guarding of Don Fernando's defences, which were known to be undermanned; and now, instead of advancing to support his allies, he ordered Ligniville to withdraw from the lines, and to fall back on the height of Dainville. Fuensaldagna, meanwhile, realising the extent of the enemy's success, decided that further resistance would be useless, and, like Duke François, began a hasty retreat, leaving his camp to be plundered by the enemy. Castelnau, with the leading squadrons of Turenne's cavalry, had reached the very gates of Arras, and was being joyfully greeted by the Governor and the inhabitants. Thus the way seemed clear before the whole French army, when a new aspect was given to the fortunes of the day by the appearance of "that Prince, who", in the words of an early historian, "was born under a star so favourable to all warlike enterprises, that, even though the cause for which he fought might be disgraced, yet his own merit won him undying glory, in encounters which, to others of his party, brought nothing but shame".¹

Condé had received no information on which he could rely² concerning the point chosen by the enemy for their intended attack; but, since the rejection of his counsels by the Archduke, he had felt assured that Turenne would attempt to force the lines, at one point or another, and spared no pains to be in readiness. Late in the evening of August 24th, a warning reached the Prince's camp that Turenne had left Mouchy, and was passing by the northern lines. Condé at once ordered six squadrons to be prepared to march, at a moment's notice, to any point attacked; and waited, on the alert for the first signal. About one o'clock in the morning the sound of the three shots fired from

¹ La Mesnardière, *Récits de Guerre*.

² The information alleged to have been given by the Comte de Gramont (see Gramont-Hamilton, *Memoirs*) cannot be reckoned under this head.

the Italians' section told him that the looked-for hour had come ; he was setting forth with the troops, when a messenger—one of the Archduke's suite—came up, breathless and distracted, bringing word that His Imperial Highness must confer immediately with M. le Prince. Condé left orders with his officers to continue the march, passing by the east side of the town ; and hurried on, to obey the summons. The Archduke, whom he found on the verge of despair, explained to him that the lines had been forced, and that defeat and disaster were imminent. Their colloquy was necessarily of the briefest, and was held in Italian, the only language they had in common ; for the Archduke spoke little French, and Condé no German. ' What must we do ? ' asked Leopold ; and Condé, with equal directness, answered : ' Break the enemy's heads, or they will break ours '. Then, in a few words, he offered to do all that lay in his power, if he might have entire control of the troops. The Archduke, forgetting pride in a sense of bewildered helplessness, begged him to act as he thought fit, and ordered his own guards to follow the Prince.¹

This point once settled, Condé wasted no further time in discussion, but rejoined his troops, and pressed on towards the northern lines. His force had gathered strength on the march ; Duke Ulrich of Wurtemberg and the Prince de Ligne had each brought their cavalry to join him ; but, even so, the numbers reached little over fifteen hundred, all told. The first signs of their allies' defeat were encountered near the southern bank of the Scarpe, when the cavalry of Don Fernando de Solis bore down upon them in full flight. The Prince ordered his own troops to halt, and stand firm, lest the panic of the rest should demoralise them. In the growing light, he recognised, among the fugitives, an officer who was known to him personally, and called to him to turn back and rally his men ; but the appeal fell on deaf ears. Condé, seeing that all such efforts were vain, held on his way, crossing the Scarpe at Blangy, while the Italians sought safety on the road to Cambrai. Morning found the Prince north of the town, on the ground lately occupied by Fuensaldagna's troops, and now at the mercy of the French infantry, who were busied, some in pillaging the camp, some in levelling obstacles and clearing a way for their cavalry

¹ Woerden, *Biographie et Fragments inédits*.

to pass through. Condé swept the lines in his advance, scattering the marauders, and making many prisoners ; till he halted, at length, above the ' ravin de Roclin-court '.

Here, the enemy seemed prepared for a determined stand ; and that with forces far outnumbering those of M. le Prince. With daylight, news had reached the French Generals that the allies were bringing up troops from the southern section of investment. Turenne at once retraced his steps from Anzin ; while La Ferté had drawn up his cavalry—three or four thousand strong—in battle order, and was facing Condé, across the ravine. Neither force could attack without descending into the hollow, and so giving the enemy an advantage. Condé, outnumbered as he was, knew that any such forward movement on his part would be madness ; but he trusted, not in vain, to many years' knowledge of La Ferté's indifferent judgment and rash impulses. Turenne, approaching from Anzin, along a stretch of high ground, gained a distant view of the position of the two forces, and drew his own conclusions forthwith : ' I think La Ferté will get himself beaten ', he said to the officers nearest him.¹ The words were scarcely uttered when the French cavalry were seen beginning the descent into the ravine. Condé waited till he felt his advantage secure ; then charged down upon the enemy, with terrible effect. The ' Gardes Françaises ', who bore the brunt of the attack, were killed or taken, almost to a man, and the remaining squadrons dispersed. The Prince was no sooner satisfied that the rout was complete, than he checked the pursuit, warned by the sight of Turenne's advancing force ; and regained the position he had left, above the ravine. It was at this juncture that the Archduke, with a handful of followers, came up, to learn how his cause fared. Seeing the French squadrons fleeing in disorder, he at once imagined that the day was won, and cried aloud, ' Signor Principe, va bene, va bene ! ' ' Va male, va male ! ' answered Condé emphatically ; ² he knew that his allies were too effectually demoralised to give him any support, and that the want of such support would prevent him from following up his success. All he could advise was that the Archduke, with Fuensaldagna and the Spanish troops, should retire, if possible in good order, upon Douai ; whilst he

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*..

² Woerden.

(Condé) would cover their retreat, and gain time for the withdrawal of those troops who had been left guarding the trenches south and east of the town. The Archduke was still sufficiently subdued to accept the suggestion blindly ; he sent orders to Fuensaldagna, and the Spaniards took the road to Douai, leaving Condé to hold Turenne in check.

The Duke of York, who not only was present on the occasion, but subsequently discussed every incident of the day, with both commanders, tells how each of 'these two great men' divined the other's individual presence from some characteristic manœuvre, without having been informed of it in any more definite way. Turenne was convinced that M. le Prince in person was opposing him ; for no other man—so he affirmed—would have shown the same judgment and authority in checking the pursuit of La Ferté's squadrons. Condé recognised Turenne's powers in the disposition of his troops, and especially of the artillery. The Marshal would not engage the enemy, fearing that M. le Prince—'the man who caused him such great anxiety'—might succeed in rallying some force of infantry, and that the Spaniards and Lorrainers might return to the attack ; the French troops therefore halted on the farther side of the 'ravin de Roclincourt', protected by a battery of seven guns, which had lately been abandoned by Don Fernando de Solis, and were now posted where their fire absolutely checked Condé's advance. For nearly an hour, the two forces faced each other across the ravine ; till Condé, knowing that the Archduke had had time to effect a retreat, withdrew his own men from under the enemy's fire. He could scarcely have maintained the position longer ; for Castelnaud, followed by the greater part of the garrison of Arras, was returning at full speed, to support Turenne. Without sign of haste or disorder, the Prince's troops retired, by the way they had come, to their own quarters, south of Arras, joined the force left on duty in the trenches, and took the road to Cambrai. With the foremost squadrons were the prisoners from La Ferté's force, and the colours of the 'Gardes Françaises', taken in the charge ; Condé chose his own place with the rear-guard, and made, as he said, 'the last black-guard in the army' march before him.¹ Turenne, knowing with whom he had to deal, abstained from any

¹ Woerden.

pursuit, and contented himself with leading his troops into Arras. An officer of the garrison, Bellefonds by name, was so ill-advised as to lead an independent attack on the Prince's rear-guard, at their passage of the Scarpe; and was promptly repulsed, with loss.

On the afternoon of the same day, Condé arrived before Cambrai, and there spent the night; next day, he joined the Spaniards and Lorrainers at Bouchain, half-way between Cambrai and Douai. His appearance was the signal for an outburst of enthusiasm from the Spanish troops; at sight of him, the soldiers 'threw their hats in the air, crying out that they owed him life and liberty'.¹ 'All would have been lost, and you saved all!' wrote Philip IV of Spain, in terms of pardonable exaggeration, to his 'cousin of Condé'. All had not been saved; the French had taken several hundred prisoners, from the Spanish and Lorraine forces; the artillery on the north and west of Arras had been abandoned, as well as a considerable part of the baggage, and the personal possessions of the officers. But it was Condé, and he alone, who had averted a crushing and disgraceful defeat, and whose achievement was admitted by friends and enemies alike. "I have it from M. de Turenne (whose sincerity is greatly to be commended)", wrote La Mesnardière, a few years later, in his *Relations de Guerre*, "that the conduct of M. le Prince, after the lines had been forced, was that of a truly great soldier; so much so, that, if he could but have rallied a small force of infantry to support him, he would have more than repaired any defeat that the Spaniards had sustained". Condé himself, though he spoke frankly of the event as 'notre malheur d'Arras', never ceased to remember his own share in it with sound professional satisfaction; knowing, as he did, what each success, partial or complete, had cost him in effort, danger, and difficulty, he maintained ever afterwards that the retreat from Arras was his greatest feat of arms. "It was my best action", he declared, in the last year of his life, to Woerden, whose account of the campaign had been submitted to him—"my best action, and I must see that it is correctly told".

The later weeks of the campaign offered no striking opportunity to either army. The allies retreated into Hainault, effectually barring the enemy's way to Brussels; but their numbers suffered from the necessity

¹ Woerden.

of garrisoning several frontier towns, and the Archduke would sanction no effort to provoke a general action. Turenne, somewhat to the surprise of his officers, undertook no further siege on a large scale, but followed up the relief of Arras by the capture of Le Quesnoy ; a comparatively small fortress, between Valenciennes and Cambrai. He explained, however, that " the season was already advanced ; and that Le Quesnoy, though not in itself a place of any great importance, yet offered great advantages for the designs he had already framed for the next campaign ".¹ One more misfortune befell the Prince, in the loss of Clermont-en-Argonne, the last remaining of the three fortresses granted to his House. Towards the end of October, Turenne, strengthened by reinforcements, was able to send a detachment, under La Ferté, for the siege of Clermont ; the garrison, few in numbers, and knowing themselves to be beyond reach of help, capitulated after three weeks' siege (November 22nd).

Condé, having bestowed his troops in what winter quarters he could wrest from the Spanish authorities, betook himself to Brussels, and spent the next two or three months in such social amusements as the city could afford. Evidences of his popular success are not wanting ; among them the letter of a Flemish lady, the Comtesse de Vils, describing the eager competition in the world of Brussels for the possession of his portrait, and how ' each one would like to boast that she has a picture which is indeed a likeness ' ;² the tribute is remarkable, to a Prince of such truly original countenance as the Great Condé. " I have written to Madame de Lincourt ", pursues Madame de Vils, " saying that I envy her good fortune, and begging her to send me a portrait of Your Highness ; it will be no small triumph for me to say that you thought me not unworthy of such an honour ". In the midst of these distractions, the want of money was ever a pressing care ; especially as, for political reasons, some degree of outward magnificence had to be displayed ; and as the Prince's domestic arrangements still entailed the maintenance of three separate households. He had visited Madame la Princesse, and even spent a fortnight in her company, soon after the retreat from Arras ; but when Valenciennes was thought to be no longer

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

² A.C., January 18, 1655.

a safe refuge from the enemy, her residence was transferred to Malines, rather than to Brussels. Already, many of the family jewels had been pawned, or sold, and the Princess's establishment diminished ; soon after her arrival in Flanders, Condé had written, concerning the doctor and the chaplain who formed part of her suite : " As the presence of the former is necessary, either to my wife or to my son, he must be given a sum of money on account ; as for the other, he can go back to France whenever he chooses, for I am in no condition to pay wages ".¹

Next to Condé himself, the figure that aroused the greatest interest in Brussels, during that winter, was that of the young ex-Queen, Christina of Sweden.² For many years this least conventional of Sovereigns had openly professed a fervent hero-worship for M. le Prince ; she had never, as yet, beheld him, but the fame of his exploits had roused her enthusiasm : " Elle ne parloit de moy qu'avec des emportemens qui me faisoient honte ",³ wrote Condé, who, it must be admitted, was not easily put to the blush. At the time of her abdication, she wrote to assure him that ' his esteem had conferred as much honour upon her as the crown she was about to relinquish ' ; and she was no sooner freed from cares of state, than she set forth to the Netherlands, in the avowed hope of meeting the Prince. The journey she accomplished in a manner not unusual with her—travelling in man's attire, and without a woman in her suite. Once arrived, however, her state of mind suffered a change. Condé, being still occupied on the campaign, could not immediately respond to a summons to visit her ; and, in his absence, she yielded to the counsels of an influential adviser, Don Antonio Pimentel, formerly Spanish ambassador to Stockholm. Pimentel was fully aware that, in the interests of the Spanish Government, he would do well to prevent Condé from making an independent alliance with an ex-Queen who might yet resume her throne ; and to this end, he prevailed on Christina to grant certain honours of precedence to the Archduke, and even to Duke François of Lorraine, without extending them to the Prince. When Condé found leisure to pay the

¹ Condé to Lenet, B.N., January 31, 1654.

² Daughter of Gustavus-Adolphus ; born 1625 ; succeeded 1632 ; abdicated 1654.

³ B.N., Condé to Fiesque, January, 1655.

long-expected visit, he sent beforehand to inquire whether he might expect the same treatment, on all points, as the Archduke; and, receiving an unfavourable answer, held sternly aloof, much to the Queen's disappointment. The situation was entirely ludicrous; for while neither Prince nor Queen would yield an inch in the question at issue, each was consumed with curiosity concerning the other. At length, after many compromises had been attempted, Condé made the suggestion that he should visit her incognito; the Queen at first refused, but the wish of years was too strong, and, in the end, she consented. At her next reception, the Prince, not without enjoyment, mingled, unannounced, among the crowd of guests. Whether he felt himself rewarded for loss of dignity by the privilege of gazing upon his hostess, is not recorded; but it is certain that he saw in her, as he said, 'a most extraordinary person'.¹ Mademoiselle, who met her, not long afterwards, in Paris, describes her as looking 'like a rather pretty little boy', in a costume that, at all times, was more or less masculine; her speech and manners were those of a trooper; and she took especial pleasure, during her stay in the Netherlands, in scandalising a Prince of such rigid propriety as the Archduke.² Even Condé allowed that she carried disregard of public opinion too far: "although", he wrote to the Comte de Fiesque, "as you know, I am not scrupulous". On the occasion of his visit, Christina's eagerness to show recognition overcame all warnings; the instant he was pointed out to her, she rushed forward to greet him. Condé retreated as promptly, foreseeing complications if his presence were proclaimed; the Queen pursued, and overtook him, but no ardour on her part could take the place of formal honours: 'Tout ou rien, Madame!' ³ said the Prince; and, bowing, left the room. Pimentel's manœuvre had been completely successful; Condé, though he continued to show some interest in the Queen, might be relied on never to forgive an insult to his rank; and the acquaintance between them progressed no further.

The salutary effect produced on the mind of the Archduke by all that had befallen before Arras was not of long duration. Throughout the campaign of 1655 Condé found himself as persistently thwarted by

¹ B.N., Condé to Fiesque, January, 1655.

² Woerden.

³ Desormeaux.

his allies as in the two years that had gone before. Whatever change could be recorded in his situation was for the worse; the equipment of the troops was even less adequate, and the advantage of the allies in numbers had totally disappeared. "Their (the French) army", wrote the Prince, "is strengthened every day by fresh troops, and by recruits sent from all parts of the country. Ours, on the contrary, is diminishing before our eyes, owing to the neglect and ill-usage suffered by the troops".¹ Turenne, as has been seen, had already prepared the way for carrying out his plan of campaign, and was able to begin operations by the siege and capture of Landrecies (June 18th to July 13th), while the Archduke was still hesitating as to the disposition of his troops. Condé was in favour of concentrating their forces, and attacking the French before Landrecies; Fuensaldagna, of separating in three divisions, and cutting off the enemy's supplies. This latter plan was adopted, but failed signally; since, owing to the delay, the besieging army was amply provisioned when the allies took the field. After the fall of Landrecies, the Archduke ordered a retreat, across the river Haine, and took up a position between Mons and Valenciennes. Turenne marched from Landrecies to Guise; and there held council, at which it was decided to cross the Scheldt below Bouchain, leaving Valenciennes on the right; re-cross at a higher point, and surprise the enemy by appearing suddenly on their flank. The allies had meanwhile abandoned their position on the Haine, and occupied one between Valenciennes and St. Amand. Condé disapproved of this movement, and only consented to it on receiving a promise from the Archduke that they should await Turenne, and defend their new position vigorously. His indignation was the greater when, at the sight of the French army advancing in battle order, Leopold, supported by Fuensaldagna, declared that their own force was insufficient for the defence, and that the only course open to them was to fall back upon Tournai. M. le Prince was requested to allow his troops once more to form the rear-guard. Turenne, seeing the enemy in retreat, ordered Castelnau to press forward, and to fall upon their rear-guard before they could reach the banks of the Scheldt. Some sharp skirmishing followed, and Condé's troops were, for a time, hard pressed; but before

¹ A.C., Condé to Fiesque, July 21, 1655.

evening, all passed the river in safety, and, though in some haste, yet without disorder. The bridges by which they crossed were immediately destroyed; and Castelnau, unable to follow, was left to await the arrival of Turenne with the main army. Bussy-Rabutin, then serving as a French 'maître-de-camp', affirms admiringly that the Prince saved his troops 'by his skill in subterfuge, as well as by his courage in fight'; that he delayed the enemy, at a critical moment, by sending certain officers, personal friends of Castelnau, to ask for a private interview, in the manner freely countenanced by both armies; and that during the exchange of compliments, Condé's last regiments gained time to cross the bridge. This view was universally accepted in the French army, and resulted in Turenne taking decided measures to check the indiscriminate use of safe-conduct in the future. Castelnau was severely blamed for having allowed himself to be duped, but neither he nor Condé ever admitted that subterfuge had been employed; although the Prince, or any commander of the time, might, as it seems, have resorted to such a measure without discredit.

During this same retreat, another friendly meeting took place; one which both armies, far from attributing to underhand motives, considered, on the contrary, 'une particularité fort galante'.¹ Among Turenne's officers was the son of Gramont, the young Comte de Guiche; now, at seventeen, engaged in his first campaign, as captain of a troop of 'volontaires'. In the midst of a skirmish, Guiche caught sight of M. le Prince, the idol of his childhood, from whom he had received many kindnesses, and whom he had looked on as the greatest of his father's friends. Forgetting all else, in the emotional impulse proper to his age and his nationality, he set off, at full gallop, towards the enemy; and, coming up to the Prince, saluted him with fervent joy and admiration. The spectators were touched, even while they smiled at the boy's naïve enthusiasm. Condé received him affectionately; then, explaining that 'this was scarcely a place for such greetings', sent him back to his troop.

The Prince was not surprised to find Guiche taking arms against him; for Gramont's definite partisanship with the Court was already well known. His share in the state trial of M. le Prince had made it practically impossible for him to refuse an active part in further

¹ Woerden.

hostilities ; and, at the beginning of the present campaign, he had accepted a command in the French army. Condé, aware of his presence, had sent him back three 'gens d'armes', taken in a skirmish. This courtesy—for so it was regarded—was by no means unusual ; but the same could not be said of the letter that accompanied it : " I cannot bring myself to keep your prisoners. I am so little accustomed to making war upon you that I cannot make up my mind to begin ; you may at least be sure that if you make war on me, I shall be in despair ; for indeed I ought not to be, and I will not be, your enemy ; and whatever extreme persecution may drive me to, I can never be other than your true friend and servant. I beg of you to do the same, on your side, and to keep the friendship you have so often shown me ".¹ The possibility of a private meeting is considered ; but is dismissed, on the ground that it must infallibly expose Gramont to suspicions of disloyalty. Gramont was not behindhand in the exchange of courtesies ; he returned ' three horsemen of the regiments of Chamilly and Cimetière ', with due acknowledgments : " The letter which Your Highness did me the honour to write, brought me mingled feelings of grief and joy, of which I say nothing, because, knowing me as you do, I have no doubt that you see all that is in my heart ".² A few words of remonstrance follow, constrained by force of circumstance : " I do not know if I ought to answer what you tell me of persecution, for I might displease you, and that would drive me to desperation ; yet, in my grief, I cannot forbear to say that it lay with you to prevent it ". Condé appears to have taken the criticism in good part, and the correspondence is kept up in a most friendly strain ; sometimes with jokes, and exchange of sympathy over the scanty provisions in the two camps. Gramont agrees that " toujours la pièce de bœuf " has drawbacks, " for those who are accustomed to partridges ". " I seem to remember ", he adds, " that we fared better in Catalonia ; but, as Your Highness truly says, much has changed since that time. When your letters are brought to me by a bugler ; when I have the honour of writing to you by the same means ; and when I reflect that I am within three leagues of you, after four years' absence, without the possibility of seeing you, I feel that I can scarcely be

¹ B.N., July 1, 1655.² A.C., July 2, 1655.

in my right senses. May God send us a change ! but what infuriates me is that this affair should be long, while life is short ".¹

The thought of Gramont's letters may have brought some consolation to the Prince, at a time when it was greatly needed. The humiliation of the retreat was closely followed by two incidents of war, each of a kind most calculated to wound his private feelings. The first concerned certain colours of the ' Régiment du Roi ', which had fallen into the hands of a Spanish foraging-party, a few days after the encounter with Castelnau. These colours, resplendent with blue satin and gold-embroidered fleurs-de-lis, were proudly displayed by the Spaniards in their camp. At the sight of a Bourbon King's lilies adorning an enemy's tents, Condé, in the words of Montglat, " remembered that he was a French Prince of the Blood ",² and, by his desire, the colours were returned forthwith. But Louis XIV had early learnt to show himself implacable ; he ordered the proffered trophies to be sent back again to M. le Prince, with a message that the King would not deprive the Spanish army of so signal and so rare an honour. Condé had perforce to accept the affront ; but his letter to the officer through whom it was conveyed shows a deep sense of injury. " I was surprised at the manner in which the colours of the ' Régiment du Roi ' were returned to me, as I had not thought that my action in this matter would displease His Majesty. I should never intend to win a trophy out of any such slight advantage over the troops which have the honour to bear the King's name ; I should think to gain more reputation by actions which would prove to His Majesty, as I thought to do on this occasion, my respect for his person, and for all that appertains to him ; since my only design, in my present conduct, is to defend myself, in all justice, from the persecution of my enemies. . . . I will keep the colours, since it is His Majesty's wish ; but you will oblige me by informing him that I shall make no use of them to prove any advantage, and that I did not think to offend by returning them ".³

The second incident, far graver in its results, was that which caused the personal quarrel between Condé and Turenne ; a quarrel whose very bitterness arose out of the solid professional regard which never ceased

¹ A.C., July 5, 1655.

² Montglat, *Nineteenth Campaign*.

³ A.C., August 16, 1655.

to exist between them. Castelnau, straitly questioned by the Marshal as to the enemy's escape across the Scheldt, contrived to give the impression that Condé's retreat had been far more precipitate than was actually the case ; he declared, not only that the cannon had been abandoned, but also that the last of the rear-guard, in their haste, had broken their ranks, and swum the river ; a statement afterwards proved, by his own admission, to be incorrect.¹ Many accusations have since been levelled against him of having deliberately lied, to save himself from the charge of inefficiency ; but it seems more probable that he had been genuinely misled by the sight of the troops crossing the flooded meadows near the river, and that he told his tale in all good faith. Be that as it may, Turenne accepted his account, and wrote the gratifying tidings, as he had heard them, to the Court ; inferring, at the same time, that Condé had complained to the French officers, whom he met on safe-conduct, of having been overruled by his allies in the matter of the retreat. By ill-fortune, the bearer of dispatches, passing near Tournai, was way-laid by the Spaniards ; and Turenne's letter, addressed to Mazarin, was laid before the allied Generals. No further provocation was needed ; on Condé's accumulated feelings of resentment and mortification, the written words acted like a spark on tinder. He saw nothing but that Turenne, on whose private friendship and professional sympathy he had instinctively relied, was apparently seeking to humiliate him by a tissue of lies. Urged by this belief, the Prince was not likely to pause for reflection ; without losing an instant, he dispatched to the Marshal a letter in which all the vexation and baffled endeavour of the past months found vent, and of which every indignant sentence betrays the writer's complete state of nervous and mental exasperation. " I should never be surprised ", he asserted, " at your making much of any advantage you might obtain over us, provided some such advantage really existed ; even when I see the improvements added by M. Renaudot,² I make allowance for custom. But when I see, in a letter written and signed by your hand, that our retreat was so hasty as to oblige our last squadron to swim the river ; that we left the guns at Valenciennes because we had no

¹ A.C., Castelnau to Condé, August 22, 1655.

² Théophraste Renaudot, whose *Gazette*, published weekly, was the fashionable newspaper of Paris.

means of withdrawing them ; and that I told how there was a great dispute between the Spaniards and myself, before leaving the post of Valenciennes (St. Amand) ; these things are so far removed from the truth that, unless I had been perfectly able to recognise your handwriting, I would not have believed that such a letter could come from you ”.¹ Then follows refutation in detail of Turenne’s statements ; most emphatically of that concerning the passage of the Scheldt : “ If you had been at the head of your troops, as I was with the rear-guard of mine, you would have seen that our last squadron was not forced to swim ; MM. de Persan and de Duras were at its head, and I was with the last squadron but one ; I can assure you that we saw none of your troops in the meadows (by the river), and that the only men there were a few who had left their ranks. I do not believe that M. de Castelnau told you otherwise ; he knows too well that,—except at the first bridge, where our troops held their ground, and where his did not cross till long afterwards,—his squadrons were not within two thousand yards of ours. . . . In conclusion, I do not intend to take credit for a retreat which was no achievement, since we were not hard pressed ; but, on the other hand, I do intend that you shall not gain credit by what is not true. I write this to satisfy my own honour, and to beg you, in future, to speak the truth when you describe actions in which I have taken part. I have always done the same by you, both when you served under me, and when we have been opposed to each other ; and I shall always continue to do so ”.

Two other missives were sent, at the same time, to the French camp : one to La Ferté, “ to correct the impression that might be gained, if M. de Turenne speaks as he writes ” ;² one to Castelnau, demanding the confirmatory evidence, which was given in due course. Turenne’s own account of his reception of the Prince’s furious attack is so characteristic as to deserve quotation. This ‘ *lettre fort piquante* ’ was brought to him “ in the presence of several officers, to whom he showed it ;³ but without, at first, saying anything to the messenger. The letter did not, in fact, annoy him, for he felt that he had done nothing contrary to his esteem for M. de Condé,

¹ B.N., August, 1655.

² A.C., August 18, 1655.

³ Turenne’s *Memoirs*, like several others of the period, were written down from dictation, and are in the third person throughout.

nor to the respect which he owed to a Prince of the Blood ; but he saw plainly that the Prince's ill-success in his affairs had caused him to fly into a passion over a very slight matter. Since, however, M. le Prince had passed the bounds of what is ordinarily permitted, M. de Turenne told the messenger that he would have him punished if he brought any more such letters ". Condé may be admitted to have had some ground for complaint ; but his violence had made it impossible for a man of Turenne's character and position to stoop to an explanation, and the breach between them was definite. The Marshal, despite his philosophical attitude, was thought by his officers to have been more sensible of the insult than he cared to allow. No message of any kind was sent to the Prince in answer. It was not till nearly five years had passed, and till the Peace of the Pyrenees had ended public hostilities, that they met face to face ; and meeting, resumed their former friendly intercourse, by sheer force of mutual understanding, without mediation or assistance of any kind.

Retribution followed swiftly on Condé's injustice. Turenne devoted the later part of the campaign to the capture of two fortresses : Condé¹—the town from which the Princes took their title—and St. Ghislain ; the allies, unable to agree upon a definite course of action, could only make a few ineffective efforts for the raising of each siege in turn. As Condé himself wrote to the Comte de Fiesque : " We receive so little assistance from Spain, our infantry is so reduced, and our course of action so weak and cowardly, that, if it continues, I foresee the loss of this whole country in a short time ".² But the chief triumphs of France over her enemies, in the course of the year 1655, were not won in the field ; they were the triumphs of diplomacy. Foremost in importance was the signing of a treaty of alliance between France and England, the terms of which included Cromwell's promise to furnish troops for the war in the Netherlands. Next followed the final secession of the army of Lorraine. Neither officers nor men had ever wholly forgiven the Spanish Government for the arrest and captivity of Duke Charles ; all were dissatisfied with the result of the campaign, and Duke François, after a series of private disputes in the allied camp, yielded readily to their

¹ Three other towns, in different parts of France, bear this name.

² *A.C.*, August 20, 1655.

wishes. Towards the end of November, in response to many assurances from the French Government, he crossed the frontier, with his forces, and placed them at the King's disposal. Lastly, came the double treachery of Hocquincourt; who, on his return to Paris, had fallen under the spell of Madame de Châtillon, and had agreed with her to surrender to the allies, for a sum of money, the two fortresses—Ham and Péronne—of which he had lately been appointed Governor. This was not the first transaction of the kind to take place during the war; two years earlier, St. Étienne, Governor of Linchamp and Château Régnault, had been bribed to deliver both these minor fortresses to the Prince. News of Hocquincourt's conspiracy came to Mazarin's ears. Turenne was hurriedly summoned to give advice; should the traitor be attacked and deprived of his office by force, or should the Cardinal aim at outbidding the enemy? Turenne advised the latter course; which was adopted with complete success. Mazarin sent an envoy to treat with Hocquincourt at Péronne, offering higher terms; and, still further to enforce his point, placed Madame de Châtillon under arrest, and threatened her life if Ham and Péronne should pass into the hands of Spain or of the Prince. The combined appeal was irresistible; Hocquincourt betrayed the Spaniards as lightly as he had been prepared to betray the French, and the two fortresses were saved.

The Spanish Government could offer no troops to replace the Lorrainers, and no money to pay the troops still in the Netherlands. Condé, in a dispatch to Madrid, formally declines responsibility for any further reverses, since the Generals neglect his counsels, and the Government gives him no means of retaining the troops in his service. He calls "all Europe to witness" that he "has spared neither life, nor fortune, nor friends", in the cause of Spain. "My present state", he writes, "deplorable as it is, will not prevent me from doing all that honour requires of me; but I beg of you (Fiesque) to make Don Louis understand how great a grief it is to me to be treated in this way, and how great a mortification to feel that, in this campaign, neither I nor my troops have been able to render His Catholic Majesty any service".¹

¹ A.C., March 25, 1656.

CHAPTER XXI

VALENCIENNES AND CAMBRAI

1656-1658

MORE than a year had passed since Condé, exasperated by Fuensaldagna's opposition, had first instructed the Comte de Fiesque to represent the state of affairs forcibly to the Government at Madrid, and, if possible, to bring about the Spanish General's recall. For many months these complaints, ever increasing in bitterness, had seemed to fall on deaf ears; but the campaign of 1655 had at length convinced the authorities that no good result could be looked for, so long as the present relations existed between the allied commanders. Condé's withdrawal would be a loss too serious to contemplate; therefore the only possible course was to find employment for Fuensaldagna elsewhere than in the Netherlands; and in March, 1656, it was decreed that the Count should exchange duties with the Marquis de Caracena, Governor of the province of Milan. The responsibility for late failures fell also, in part, upon the Archduke, who was asked, at the same time, to resign his post of Viceroy. His chosen successor bore the name made famous by the conqueror of Lepanto,—Don John, or Juan, of Austria; and, like him, was an illegitimate scion of royalty. This second Don Juan, the acknowledged son of King Philip IV,¹ had held commands, either naval or military, from a very early age, and had acquitted himself with some distinction. He was now only twenty-seven; and his advancement to the dignity of Viceroy so fired his ambition, that he set forth fully prepared to claim the honours due to a Prince of legitimate Royal birth.

Condé, as has been seen, had lost no occasion of

¹ The mother of Don Juan was Maria Calderon, an actress.

inveighing against both the Archduke and Fuensaldagna, or of representing the condition to which the allied army had been reduced. He wrote of 'une grande disette de pain'¹ among the troops, "who had received no pay for many weeks"; and of the desertions which were the inevitable result of continued want and misery: "That rascal, La Marcousse, went, yesterday evening, with his men to join the enemy; his trumpeter came and told me of it, half-an-hour later".² The Prince might fairly claim to have done all that one man could do, to repair the neglect of others; but the plan on which the allied army was organised, and the necessity of collaboration, crippled him at every turn. At one moment he even threatened to journey himself to Madrid, unless matters were speedily remedied, and there lay his case before King Philip; a prospect so unwelcome to that monarch and to his Ministers, that the change of government in the Netherlands was effected with all possible speed.

Caracena took over his new command in April; and a month later, Don Juan arrived in Brussels, to be received with all the pomp that even he could desire. But his hopes of recognition as a Spanish Prince of the Blood were doomed to disappointment, in at least one quarter. Condé lost no time in giving him, as he had given the Archduke, a practical lesson in the rules of precedence; one which St. Simon recorded, many years later, to the Prince's credit. The arrival of the new Viceroy was shortly followed by that of the exiled King, Charles II of England, whom the conclusion of Mazarin's treaty with Cromwell had forced to leave the French Court, and to seek support from Spain. Don Juan, taking advantage of the King's misfortunes, treated him with scant ceremony, and so drew humiliation on himself. Condé had no personal grievance to complain of, in this case; but every instinct forbade him to stand by and see an upstart, of Don Juan's antecedents, insult the head of a Royal house. He invited both King and Viceroy to dine with him on a certain day; together with all the chief personages of Brussels. The guests found a magnificent feast prepared; but one place of honour only was laid at the table. Don Juan, speechless with astonishment,

¹* Condé to Lenet, B.N., June 13, 1655.

²* Condé to Lenet, B.N., September, 1655.

saw M. le Prince, whose exalted claims of rank were known to all beholders, escort the King to this seat, and serve him, kneeling. Charles, who, in Paris, had passed more than one festive evening with the Prince, begged him to be seated; but Condé stood erect and motionless, like a servant, behind his guest's chair; saying only, in answer to repeated invitations, that, when he had had the honour of serving His Majesty, he would find a table for himself and Don Juan. He yielded at length to the King's insistence; seats were brought, though only 'tabourets', in distinction to the 'fauteuil' of the principal guest. Condé immediately took possession of the coveted place on the King's right hand; and Don Juan had no choice but to occupy the 'tabouret' on the left, and endure the situation as best he might. Mortified and indignant as he was, the rebuke was too just, and too public, for him to disregard it; from that day he treated the proscribed King with all the honour due to a reigning sovereign.¹

The formalities involved by the arrival of a new General, as well as a new Viceroy, did not serve to hasten the opening of the campaign. The French were once more first in the field. Tournai was threatened, but Turenne, after reconnoitring the town, pronounced it too well guarded to be taken by assault, and too far in the enemy's country for a prolonged siege. Instead, he turned his forces towards the great fortress of Valenciennes, which was invested on June 15th. The siege was recognised as an enterprise of the first importance; for Valenciennes, by its position, as well as by the strength of its fortifications, was rightly accounted one of the chief places of the frontier. The besieging army numbered some twenty-five thousand men. La Ferté's division occupied the section west of the town; the force directly under Turenne's command lay to the north and east; and to the south, a small section was occupied by the troops of Lorraine, now in the pay of France. The western section of investment was divided from the rest by the river Scheldt, flowing north and south under the city walls. The French troops lost no time in entrenching themselves against attack from a relieving force; but their task, in so doing, was far harder than that of the allies at Arras. Condé and Don Juan, with an army twenty thousand strong, marched by

¹ St. Simon, *Mémoires*.

Bouchain, and there gained control of the principal sluices of the Scheldt ; the flood-gates which held back the river from inundating the marshes round Valenciennes. Turenne heard some rumours of the sluices being raised at Bouchain, but he was far from guessing what havoc might be wrought by the alternate opening and closing of the gates. His soldiers, striving, as best they might, to raise siege-works out of a swamp, were constantly overtaken by the sudden rush of waters, which made all their labours vain. It was only with the greatest difficulty that communication could be maintained between the eastern and western sections of investment ; day after day the men, standing waist deep in water, toiled to bridge the flood ; and, though their efforts were to some extent successful, Turenne freely admits that " if it had been known beforehand to what a height the river would rise ", the siege would, in all probability, never have been undertaken.

On July 1st, the allies pitched their camp near Famars, under four miles south of Valenciennes. Marsin was detached towards St. Amand, to guard the roads to Lille and Douai ; Condé and Don Juan continued, with the main army, on the right bank of the Scheldt. It had not taken the Prince long to discover that he had gained little or nothing by the exchange of Viceroys ; for whereas Caracena, though less distinguished in his profession, was also less aggressive than Fuensaldagna, Don Juan was by nature far more disposed to exact deference than the Archduke. The Duke of York gives a somewhat flattering estimate of both Viceroy and General ; yet even he observes with amazement " how Don Juan and the Marquis de Caracena, who were alike gifted with good sense, intelligence, and courage, could nevertheless attach importance to formalities which they well knew were prejudicial to their King's service, as well as to their own reputation ".¹ Don Juan, in the Duke's opinion, " if he had not had the misfortune, as it may be called, to have been brought up as a son of Spain, might, by his natural gifts, have become a great man ; but his scrupulous formality spoilt all ". One cherished attribute of the new Viceroy's dignity, was the length of the hours which he insisted should be held sacred to his repose ; even Fuensaldagna's punctilious observance of the ' siesta '

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

paled before that of a commander whose habit it was, on arriving at his quarters, "to retire immediately to bed, however early it might be, and not to rise till the following morning". This indolence characterised Don Juan in other matters as well, and it was scarcely surprising that Mademoiselle, meeting him two years later, in Paris, should write of him, in spite of his youth, as 'assez bien fait, mais un peu gros'.¹ He was, at least, not likely to dispute with Condé over the more active duties of a Commander-in-Chief. While he slept, the Prince reconnoitred the enemy's lines, at daybreak, on July 2nd; and left an outpost on the heights of Urtebise, an important coign of vantage south-west of the town. Nearer to the enemy, on raised ground, a battery was established, whose fire did some damage to the Lorraine troops in their lines.

As the allies advanced to Famars, Turenne, foreseeing an attack, turned his whole attention to the defence of the lines. He, like the Prince, had much to suffer from his colleagues. La Ferté, who had been detained in Paris by illness, returned to take up his command on the nineteenth day of the siege. The Marquis d'Huxelles, acting in his stead, had carried out Turenne's orders by causing a double row of palisades to be erected outside the western lines; but La Ferté, immediately on his arrival, pronounced the outer row superfluous, and demonstrated his authority over his own section by ordering it to be removed. Jealousy, and the fear of being looked on as a mere subordinate, prompted him to seize every opportunity of neglecting Turenne's counsels; till retribution followed, as surely as in any moral tale.

For twelve days and nights the allied Generals contented themselves with entrenching their own camp, and with threatening every point of the enemy's lines in turn; the French numbers were barely adequate for guarding the zone of investment, at the same time that the siege operations were being carried forward, and the constant strain told heavily on both officers and men. The besieged garrison, for their part, aided by a considerable force of armed inhabitants, had made a vigorous defence, but their energies now showed signs of flagging; their hardships were increased by the flooding of the Scheldt, for Turenne's forces succeeded

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

in diverting part of the overflow from their camp into the town. At length, on the morning of July 14th, fresh signs of movement were seen in the allied camp ; later in the day, the baggage was on the road to Bouchain, while the army, drawn up in battle order on the right bank of the Scheldt, seemed only waiting for darkness to attack. Before nightfall, Turenne received certain information from a Spanish deserter, that the point chosen by the enemy would be the centre of the western section, at Anzin.¹ He at once ordered his own men to spend the night under arms, ready to give assistance at the shortest possible notice ; and sent word to La Ferté, who, misguided as ever, treated the warning with contempt. Next morning found the allies still motionless, and for twelve hours La Ferté may have imagined himself justified ; but, within the walls of Valenciennes, the Governor had received a communication, brought by a messenger through the French lines, from M. le Prince ; telling him that an attack would be made at Anzin on the night of July 16th, and that the sluice-gates must be opened, to flood the enemy's camp at the same time. When darkness had fallen, the allied forces crossed the Scheldt, by bridges of their own building, and marched, in three divisions, towards Anzin. Marsin's detachment, passing to the north of the town, crossed the river in the opposite direction, to make a holding attack on Turenne's camp.

For the attack on La Ferté's lines, the allied troops were formed in a single line ; Condé on the left, the Prince de Ligne in the centre, Don Juan and Caracena on the right. Puységur, La Ferté's Lieutenant-General, whose advice had been as little regarded as that of Turenne, describes the lines as ' the most wretched I have ever seen ', and his opinion is confirmed by other eye-witnesses. The regiment of ' Piémont ', on guard-duty at Anzin, alone offered any serious resistance ; Lignan, their captain, behaved with great gallantry, but was wounded and taken prisoner ; and the men, finding themselves unsupported, gave way, at length, on all sides. At two o'clock in the morning, La Ferté was roused by Puységur ; who informed him, briefly, that the lines were forced, and the infantry dispersed ;

¹ Not to be confused with the village of the same name on the outskirts of Arras.

further, that the cavalry, who might still avert disaster by a prompt advance, were standing idle, for want of orders. La Ferté had never been accused of lacking courage. He placed himself at the head of the foremost squadrons, and led them boldly in the direction of the enemy ; but the panic and disorder, within the lines, had reached a point beyond his control. His squadrons had barely advanced twenty yards, when they heard, close upon them in the dim light, the cries of the attacking force, ' Tue ! Tue ! ' No more was needed ; they turned, abandoning their leader, and fled towards the river bank ; seeking escape by the bridge, or dyke, of fascines, which had maintained communication with Turenne's quarters. Puységur, knowing that here a fresh danger awaited them, made desperate efforts to check their flight ; but in vain ; the sluice-gates had been lifted, and the rising waters swept away the dyke, carrying men and horses to destruction. Those who survived, made their way, with other remnants of the scattered force, towards the frontier towns of Douai and Condé. La Ferté, left alone with two or three of his personal followers, was instantly surrounded by the enemy, and would scarcely have escaped with his life, but for one Ricousse, a member of the Prince's suite, who recognised him, and formally made him prisoner. Puységur, and many other officers, were also taken, and brought into the town ; where the foremost of the relieving force had already been received with acclamations.

Marsin's attack on Turenne's lines had been delivered, and repulsed, at the moment when the main army was forcing the lines at Anzin. The small numbers engaged left the Marshal no doubt that the attack was a mere feint, and that the enemy's chief efforts were being directed against the western section. Without awaiting a summons, he ordered six infantry battalions to cross the dyke, and support La Ferté's troops. The waters were rising rapidly ; two battalions only were able to cross in safety ; and these had scarcely reached the farther side before they were involved in the general rout. At daybreak, the whole of the allied forces could be seen, marching up to the gates of Valenciennes. The river was impassable ; Turenne could make no attempt to check their advance ; all he could do was to withdraw his own troops beyond reach of immediate

attack. This he did, without loss of time ; orders were given to evacuate the lines, abandoning the greater part of the baggage, and to march southwards towards Le Quesnoy. "Some little confusion", to quote the Marshal's own words, "could not be avoided at first, but within half an hour's march of the town (Valenciennes) all was in good order".

Condé's first impulse on entering Valenciennes, was to push on, through the town, and dispose of Turenne's force before La Ferté's troops should have had time to rally. But discipline had grown lax, in more than one division of the allied army ; during the inevitable pause occupied by the Governor's greetings, the men—especially the Spaniards under Don Juan's command—dispersed to plunder ; and before order could be restored it became clear that Turenne was for the moment beyond reach. The Prince, fairly satisfied with the night's work, then turned his attention towards the prisoners. He had already sent orders that Puységur should be treated with consideration, and brought directly before the authorities. Puységur himself tells how the Prince, finding him in the presence of the Governor, exclaimed at once : "Why, there is Puységur ; a very good friend of mine ! I should like him and all others for whom he is willing to answer, to be prisoners on parole", and how all was arranged accordingly. Then Condé, turning to Puységur, said : "Now take me to see M. de la Ferté". "I will go and prepare him for such an honour", answered Puységur ; and hurried on ahead to the house where the prisoner had been lodged. Some warning was needed ; La Ferté—a stout man, heavily built—had been brought into the town by his captors, at a good pace, and with some rough handling ; so that between heat, breathlessness, and agitation, he was scarcely ready to welcome a distinguished visitor. Condé stayed for no preparations, but entered hard on the heels of his messenger ; and, mindful of a late grievance, hailed La Ferté with compliments of doubtful sincerity : "I could wish we had taken your comrade (Turenne) instead of you. I would have taught him to write the truth. It is not that I am afraid to meet him in the field ; I should fear you much more". The terms of imprisonment were harsher for La Ferté than for Puységur, although, in the matter of ransom, he was spared all personal

expense : " All I have to say, since you are my prisoner ", continued the Prince, " is that you shall be at liberty as soon as possible ; but as I must mind my manners with these people (the Spaniards), I shall not be able to send you back to-morrow. I want none of your money for ransom, but I shall be glad to take whatever the King will give to set you free ".¹ To alleviate the situation, a passport was written, and signed by Condé, before he left the room, allowing Madame de la Ferté to join her husband during his captivity. " These people ", Condé's usual term in referring to his allies, were disposed to question his dealings with their chief prisoner ; but the Prince would brook no criticism : " I am sorry that M. de Caracena takes the affair in this way ", he wrote, " but I consider that I only acted as I ought ".² La Ferté spent six months in detention ; at the end of that time, the sum of 30,000 ' livres ', demanded by Spain for his release, was duly paid by the French Government ; but it seems doubtful whether any part of the ransom ever reached the Prince's coffers.

Condé's intervention enabled Puységur to return to France on parole, and collect his own ransom. The King had no more loyal servant than this veteran of Richelieu's wars ; but neither public nor private differences could quench Puységur's fervent professional admiration for the Prince, whose qualities as a leader had cast a spell upon him. " You will make no progress till you win M. le Prince back from the enemy ", he told Mazarin, in an interview which took place soon after his return : " What success they have won, has been won by him ; and if they had believed him more, they might have prevented our doing much that we have done ". In answer, Mazarin dwelt on Condé's ambition, his overbearing temper, and the Queen's personal dislike to him ; till conversation was interrupted by the entrance of a courtier, the Comte de Nogent, who had been hunting with the King at Vincennes, and brought back a hare's foot, which he displayed as a trophy. " We are talking on affairs of State ", said the Cardinal ; " shall this man interrupt us with a hare's foot ? " " Your Eminence would rather he had brought you the foot of M. le Prince ", suggested Puységur ; and Mazarin turned on him with something of reproach : " Ah, Puységur, you have a great opinion

¹ Puységur, *Mémoires*.

²* Condé to Lenet, B.N., August, 1655.

of the Prince ! ” “ Yes, I have ”, answered Puységur boldly, “ I know for a certainty that no man alive is his equal in courage, or in knowledge of war ”. With that, the interview closed abruptly ; and Condé’s champion departed, fully aware that he had destroyed all chances of favour with the Cardinal.¹

Puységur spoke with the enthusiasm which certain aspects of Condé’s genius never failed to inspire ; but the days that followed the relief of Valenciennes served to prove that the Prince had met a soldier who was at least his match. Turenne has been censured, by no less an authority than the First Napoleon, for holding his troops stationary in the lines before Valenciennes, instead of organising a combined attack, with La Ferté, upon the enemy ; but neither Napoleon nor any other critic has written, save with the warmest admiration, of the retreat by which he may almost be said to have repaired the disaster. His forces reached Le Quesnoy on July 16th ; with every intention—so it appeared to the enemy—of continuing their retreat towards the frontier. Turenne, however, had reflected, as he says, on “ the far-reaching effects of such a retreat, owing to the general dissatisfaction which it would spread throughout France, and to the presence of M. le Prince among the enemy ” ; and had resolved to check it, even at great risk. To the amazement of his officers, he ordered the troops to encamp under the walls of Le Quesnoy, facing towards Valenciennes. The tents were pitched ; but no defences could be constructed, for the necessary tools had been abandoned, with other baggage, in the retreat ; the sole protection was a ravine, which stretched along the front of the camp. Thus, with every sign of confidence, Turenne awaited the enemy ; a desperate measure, but one triumphantly justified by success. On July 18th, the allies were seen advancing from Valenciennes ; and the French officers, judging further retreat inevitable, scarcely awaited Turenne’s orders before preparing to strike their camp. They were soon undeceived ; the Marshal, little given as he was to sensational effects, drew a pistol, and threatened to shoot any man who left his post. The allies came almost within firing distance, and then halted ; perplexed by Turenne’s resolute stand, they suspected some concealed design, and

¹ Puységur, *Mémoires*.

hesitated to attack. Even Condé, though more inclined than the rest to provoke an action, seems to have been partly influenced, for once, by the caution of the Spaniards. For two days the armies faced each other without sign of movement on either side. Each day brought reinforcements to the French camp ; some had rallied from La Ferté's scattered force ; some had been dispatched from France, to arrive at this opportune moment. Finally, on the third morning, the allies quitted their ground, and marched northwards. Condé had set his heart on retaking the place whose name he bore ; and the French, since La Ferté's defeat, were in no condition to hinder him. Turenne, divining his intention, sent a detachment to convoy provisions into the town ; but, even so, the supplies were inadequate for a siege, and the Governor of Condé capitulated after a brief defence.

The French stand at Le Quesnoy had, none the less, robbed the allies of their advantage, and changed the aspect of the campaign. In the three months that followed, no enterprise of note was undertaken by either side ; but Turenne's supreme skill in strategy, repeatedly asserted, left the advantage decidedly with him at the close of hostilities, though he had no decisive victory to his credit. The weariness of the long struggle was telling heavily on the allies ; each succeeding year increased the difficulty of putting an army in the field ; and even when this much had been achieved, the troops, raked in from every part of Europe, unpaid, undisciplined, and moved by no incentive of loyalty or of patriotism, were each year less to be depended on. No man in the allied army suffered more from these causes than Condé himself. His hopes of a triumphant return to France grew fainter with every campaign ; and now, after some years of exile, he was fully conscious that no alternative honours, offered by Spain, could compensate a Bourbon Prince for the position he had lost in his own country. The future was dark, and the present filled with countless anxieties : " I have letters from Brussels which drive me distracted ", he wrote to the much-enduring Lenet : " my creditors press me to the utmost ; speak of my money affairs, I entreat you, to M. de Caracena and to Don Juan, for I can wait no longer. . . . My jewels are in England, in the charge of a man who deals honestly over them, and,

since they are safe there, I have not made up my mind to let them change hands ".¹ As for his relations with the Spanish Generals, it was soon clear that the question of winter quarters was to be as unfailing a source of contention with Don Juan as with his predecessors ; the Prince writes indignantly in this connection : " I should find no difficulty too great to be overcome in the King's service ; but it is in no way agreeable to be treated like a servant, or like a young subaltern. God made me neither the one nor the other, and I am in no humour to change ".²

Despite misfortunes, Condé's mercurial temperament made it impossible for him not to seek, and find, entertainment, wherever it was to be had. His correspondence with his intimate friends, throughout the winter of 1656-7, is full of balls and festivities of all descriptions ; among them, the ' admirable ball ' given by Madame de Grimberghe, at which the ladies, for some incomprehensible freak, appeared with their faces blacked ! " Tell me all your amusements, and whether Madame la Majore is still beautiful and cruel ", the Prince writes to Guitaut,³ and adds, ' mille amitiés ' to the lady in question ; later, Lenet receives the direction, " Make my compliments to all the ladies whom you see, and particularly to those who speak of me to you ".⁴ Boutteville he reports of as ' doing wonders ' in Brussels ; and, according to some rumours, the future Marshal outdid even M. le Prince in social success.

Madame la Princesse took no part in the gaieties of the winter. She lived retired, at Malines, receiving occasional visits from her husband ; and here, in November, 1656, her third child—a daughter—was born. This little Princess was not a year old when her kinswoman, the Abbess of Fontévrault,⁵ offered to ensure that she should succeed her in the office ; to which suggestion the Prince sent an answer, in all seriousness, that he could as yet make no decision : " partly ", he explains, " on account of my daughter's tender age, and partly because, having but one, I cannot bring myself, so soon, to make a nun of her ".⁶

¹ *Condé to Lenet, B.N., 1656.

² **Ibid.*, B.N., 1657 (no date).

³ **Archives d'Epoisses* (MS. copy at Chantilly). ⁴ *B.N., June, 1657.

⁵ Jeanne-Baptise de Bourbon, daughter of Henri iv and Gabrielle d'Estrées.

⁶ Condé to Auteuil, August 10, 1657.

Of Condé's relations with his daughter, during her short life of scarcely four years, few records remain ; but it may safely be asserted that ' Mademoiselle de Bourbon ' can never have rivalled her brother of Enghien in their father's affections. ' Henri-Louis ' had continued his studies uninterruptedly since his first introduction to the Jesuit College ; and, with his own hand, still kept the Prince carefully informed of his progress. Each ' theme ' judged worthy of the honour was dispatched for paternal inspection, either to camp or to Brussels. One such composition arrived shortly after the relief of Arras, with apologies for disturbing the Prince ' in other occupations, more important than that of reading a theme ' ; another was sent for the New Year, with the satisfied comment : " I hope you will think it not badly done, for it has sent me up four places. I beg of you, Monsieur, to accept it as a New Year's gift, since I have nothing else to give you, for this year, which I wish may be the happiest possible for you " .¹ The Duke also corresponded with Marigny, and with Lenet ; both of whom may be pardoned for giving him a more sanguine view of the Prince's affairs than was actually warranted by facts. " Pray send me word, soon, that Mazarin is a prisoner ", wrote Henri-Louis ; already, like others of his race, ' a good hater ' : " I am in despair at being neither old enough, nor strong enough, to help my father ; but I can trust him ; he will show the Cardinal no mercy " .² The monotony of school-life was broken for the Duke by visits from officers of the allied army, or by brief glimpses of Condé himself ; these latter occasions were rare, but there can be no doubt of the pleasure they gave to both father and son. When the time of the final examinations at Namur draws near, the Prince writes to ask that a date may be fixed before the opening of the campaign ; he must be present in person to hear his son ' faire ses disputes ' in public. To this letter is added, in an autograph postscript, the welcome injunction that the Duke is to come for one night, to meet his father at Malines : " My son need not bring a bed, as I will give mine. None of the (Jesuit) fathers need accompany him ; a valet and one other will be enough " .³

Notwithstanding these distractions, Henri-Louis

¹ B.N.

² Duc d'Enghien to Lenet, November, 1655, B.N.

³ * Condé to Lenet, May, 1657, B.N.

passed his examinations with credit, and bore off several prizes. His course of studies at Namur was now completed, and he was removed to Antwerp for a 'cours de Philosophie'. Condé had ideas of his own as to methods of education, and some consternation was caused among the Jesuits of Antwerp when he insisted that a special class should be formed for his son, to which other 'lâiques', or day-pupils were to be admitted, as well as the 'religieux', or boarders, most of whom were destined for the religious life. These 'lâiques' were perforce drawn from among the burgher families of Antwerp; and those who opposed the plan demanded indignantly "whether the Prince wished to see his son the companion of the sons of shopkeepers?" "We believe", answered Condé's representatives, "that the Prince does not look for rank, but for talent and emulation". After much discussion, the formation of a 'lay' class was sanctioned by all the authorities concerned, from the Pope downwards, and M. le Duc's education was able to proceed. But the Prince was not yet entirely satisfied as to his son's progress. The education offered by the Jesuit fathers was limited to sciences; in the matter of accomplishments, the resources of Namur and Antwerp left much to be desired. The dancing-master in charge of the Duke's deportment was discovered to have given him 'les plus méchants commencements du monde'; and Condé applied in haste, for help, to Madame de Longueville. A new professor must be found; one who could boast Court credentials and 'le bel air de danse': "You must forgive me if I have not entire confidence in you on this point", the Prince wrote at the same time to Auteuil, the Duke's former tutor, now an agent in Paris. "If", he adds, "there should be any good teacher who is willing to come, I will not complain of the fees".¹ This from a Prince whose family jewels were in pawn, and who had lately dismissed his wife's chaplain sooner than pay him his salary!

The campaign of 1657 left Condé little leisure to follow the course of his son's studies. The spring, that year, was early; by the end of March the allies were in the field, and had laid a successful siege to St. Ghislain. But a new power had now to be reckoned with; the alliance

¹ Condé to Auteuil, February 3, 1658, *A.C.*

between France and England was producing practical results. A powerful contingent of troops had been promised by the Lord Protector, on condition that the French should undertake the siege of either Mardyck, Gravelines, or Dunkirk ; either of the two former ports to be handed over to the English, in the case of surrender. The Spaniards, receiving news of this agreement, devoted their efforts to guarding and strengthening the seaport towns, rather than to following up their success at St. Ghislain. Turenne, in his headquarters at Béthune, awaited his opportunity till the end of May ; by which time six thousand Englishmen of the New Model Army had disembarked at Calais ; then profiting by the unguarded state of the enemy's fortresses inland, he marched swiftly upon Cambrai. Condé had spent some time at St. Ghislain since the siege, to superintend the raising of a cavalry force ; he had accomplished this task, and was passing through Boussu, on his way to join Don Juan in Flanders, when the news reached him that Cambrai was invested. He reflected, not without thankfulness, that the Spaniards were entirely beyond reach of immediate communication ; for a brief moment he might fling to the winds all paralysing restrictions of etiquette, and the necessity of ' minding his manners with these people '. Acting solely on his own initiative, and without any pretence of consulting his allies, he took the road to Cambrai, at the head of a cavalry force between four and five thousand strong. At the gates of Valenciennes he halted, sent for the Governor, and explained matters in a few words : " Cambrai is besieged. I shall try to relieve the place before the enemy has completed his investment. Make way through your town for my troops ". The demand was so authoritative that the Governor hastened to comply, although admittance was usually denied to armies on the march. Condé rode on ahead, to make a reconnaissance, returning to join his forces as they emerged from the town. He then summoned his officers, and told them that not an instant must be lost ; in three days, the French lines before Cambrai would be strong enough to defy attack. " March straight before you till you come to the counterscarp ", he ordered, " and drive whatever enemy you meet out of your way. There must be no facing about to defend

the rear ; march straight for the town ".¹ At Bouchain they halted once more, this time for the purpose of finding a guide ; for night had fallen, and ten miles of rough marshy country still lay between them and Cambrai. The choice fell on a parish priest, Guérin by name, who had a great local reputation as a sportsman, and was believed to know every swamp and thicket for miles around. Whether Guérin was, at heart, in sympathy with the French cause, or whether he was himself misled by the darkness, it is impossible to say ; but, as a result of his guidance, Condé's forces missed the track, and spent a great part of the night on foot, leading their horses through an almost impenetrable wood. Towards dawn they emerged at length into open country, and continued their advance unhindered. They marched, by the Prince's order, in echelon ; Boutteville led the first line ; Condé, the second, and Marsin, the third.

As on that earlier occasion, when Condé had journeyed across France to join the ' army of the Princes ', the guide's mistake proved a blessing in disguise. Turenne, hearing rumours that a relief force was approaching from Bouchain, had argued with himself that the Prince would expect opposition on the highway, and would almost certainly march by some less frequented route. A strong detachment of cavalry was posted, accordingly, on the outskirts of the town, at a point which Condé must inevitably have passed, if his troops had followed the track originally selected. As it was, their wanderings led them, by devious ways, into the main road, which had been left very insufficiently guarded. Bussy-Rabutin, in his *Memoirs*, assumes that Condé's suspicions had, by this time, been aroused ; and that, reckoning on Turenne's mental process, he deliberately made for the high road. In any case, having found it, he made no attempt to leave it, but advanced at a brisk pace towards the town ; till, within half a mile of the walls, Boutteville found his way disputed by five squadrons of French cavalry. A short skirmish followed, in which Condé, as well as Boutteville, was engaged. The Prince narrowly escaped with his life from a hand-to-hand struggle with an officer of the regiment of ' Clérembault ' ; two of his staff, and the page who followed him, were taken prisoners at his

¹ Puysegur, *Mémoires*.

side ; but at the second charge, the French were scattered, and the way lay clear before the relieving force. It was still scarcely daylight when the Governor of Cambrai was roused by a message that a body of cavalry was at the gates demanding admittance in the name of the Prince of Condé. The Governor, believing that he knew accurately the positions of the French and of the allied troops, and allowing for the notorious deliberation of the Spaniards, in any undertaking, had banished from his mind all hope of relief. The first idea that suggested itself to him was that of a trap, laid by the enemy, to make him open the gates ; it was not till he had recognised Condé in person, that he realised the town's safety, and fell on his knees to welcome the deliverer.

Turenne, whose army camp was on the opposite side of the town to that by which the relief force approached, had passed the night—by his own account—in a state of complete uncertainty as to the enemy's movements. When daylight revealed to him the whole of Condé's force, drawn up under the walls, and about to pass through the city gates, he sent immediate orders to his officers to prepare for a retreat. He writes himself, with the frankness that never deserted him in moments of failure, that he had undertaken the siege in the certainty of finding only a small garrison, and of being able to defeat such reinforcements as the Spaniards were likely to send ; but that " the Prince's determination to enter the town in person—which was a very bold measure—entirely foiled all these designs ". The French troops, hurriedly assembled, fell back upon Le Catelet ; marching in an order which betrayed more haste than prudence. Puységur's incorrigible fervour, on Condé's behalf, breaks out once more in his narrative : " We were not marching as we should have done ", he says, " for the infantry was left to form the rearguard ; and that in retreating from a town which eighteen of the enemy's squadrons had just entered, under the command of the cleverest and most valiant man in the world ". The cavalry retreated across an open plain, at a pace which would have left the infantry entirely unsupported in case of attack ; till, at Puységur's request, Turenne ordered those in advance to halt, and allow the rearguard to come up. The precaution, as it proved, was unnecessary ; Condé's force

was by no means strong enough to justify him in provoking an engagement in open country; and the French troops reached Le Catelet without sign of pursuit.

Turenne was forced, by this unlooked-for check, to reconstruct his whole plan of campaign. Cambrai had been wrested from him, and in Flanders, the Spanish army blocked the way to the coast. In the hope of creating a diversion, he turned again towards Luxembourg, and continued near the frontier; protecting La Ferté, who, still farther westwards, undertook the siege of Montmédy.

The discouraging character of their late campaigns had disposed Condé's allies to make the most of any success that fell to his share; the news of the relief of Cambrai was received with loud rejoicings, and a medal was struck to commemorate the event, bearing an impression of the town, with the motto, 'Condeo liberante'. Having thus publicly acknowledged his obligation to the Prince, Don Juan showed no sign of profiting either by his example or by his counsels; and the campaign, after this brilliant opening, proved yet another dismal record of mismanaged effort and lost opportunity. The first failure was that of a descent on Calais, planned while the French forces were engaged at Montmédy; the attack was to have been made from the shore, and the Prince de Ligne, to whom the chief conduct of the enterprise was entrusted, made all endeavour useless, by miscalculating the hour of the tides. A few weeks later, the convoys which should have been intercepted on their way to provision the besieging army at Montmédy, passed by the Spanish camp in safety; because Don Juan had retired to his customary rest without giving orders to his troops to intercept them, and the officer left in command could not, or would not, take action on his own responsibility. These, and other like incidents, are duly chronicled by the Duke of York, whom the treaty between England and France had driven from Turenne's camp, and who now appeared in a new capacity, as a volunteer in the Spanish service. The Duke, an able and hard-working officer, trained under the best Generals in Europe, was filled with such amazement by Don Juan's inaction, that he remarked on it to Condé, in emphatic terms: "When you have served with the Spaniards as long as I

have ", answered the Prince, with bitter resignation, " you will know better than to be surprised at any mistakes they may make ".¹

Condé was, in truth, too much exhausted by long-continued mental and physical strain, to oppose either allies or enemies with his former vigour. Montmédy and St. Venant fell, in succession, to the French ; and, as a conclusion to the campaign, Turenne, returning to the plan agreed upon with Cromwell, marched into Flanders, and reduced Mardyck to capitulation, after a three days' siege. The allies had gained St. Ghislain and saved Cambrai, but had been forced to raise the siege of Ardres ; a later enterprise, undertaken towards the end of August, and abandoned after a few days, at Turenne's approach. The first days of October found the allied troops encamped along the coast, a few miles inland, between Bergues and Nieupoort. The season was late, and the weather atrocious ; but the annual disagreement over winter quarters had still to be fought out to the last limit. Condé's fortunes might almost be said to have reached their lowest ebb. Four successive campaigns had proved to him that, paralysed as he was by the Spanish notions of generalship, and opposed to such an adversary as Turenne, he could look for no decisive or lasting triumph over his enemies. His health showed signs of failing, and his financial troubles were more pressing than ever before ; at Malines and at Namur, the households of Madame La Princesse and of M. le Duc were in actual want of food and fuel. In the allies' camp, life was made almost unbearable by persistent rains : " If this weather last another night ", wrote the Prince, " the troops will be under two feet of water ".² Fresh cases of illness were reported every day ; the Duke of York asserts that " with the exception of the native Spaniards, few officers or men were free from fever, and more than half their number were entirely incapacitated ".³ Condé was in no state of health to resist the prevailing scourge ; he had scarcely arrived at Bergues when the first symptoms of intermittent fever declared themselves. For weeks he struggled gallantly against its repeated attacks ; as became a

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

² Condé to Lenet, October 3, 1657, B.N.

³ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

Prince of whom it was said that "in the midst of misfortunes, he could still maintain the character of a hero".¹ So long as his strength held out, he fulfilled all his professional duties to the utmost, and even when active work was impossible, no detail of public or private affairs escaped his attention. He had learnt, to his cost, how much depended on his efforts, and how little exertion Don Juan was likely to make in seeing that the troops were either paid, lodged, or fed. The progress of the Prince's illness can be traced, among much business matter, in the letters, written at his dictation to Lenet, and to his friends in Paris; at first the uncertainty as to whether the fever will recur on the third or the fourth day: "I am very impatient to see what will happen", and the hope that he "may be quit of it for seven attacks";² then the discouraging news that the sixth attack has been more severe than any former ones, and has left him "in a state of more than ordinary weakness": "I see that my illness is to be an affair of time, which is a great annoyance to me".³ To Auteuil he writes that the fever is 'very obstinate', and, though he will not admit it to be dangerous, 'bien pénible et fatigant'.⁴ As his strength fails, he dwells with increasing emphasis on his anxiety both as to the payment of the troops, and as to their winter quarters; he asks for details of Caracena's scheme for the latter, and begs Lenet, almost pathetically, to send word of a satisfactory conclusion. "Now that I am ill, you ought to give me some good news to cheer me, and to lessen my discomforts a little. Nothing would answer that purpose better than seeing these two questions finally settled!"⁵ He is also much concerned for the care of certain officers wounded in a recent skirmish: "I beg of you to see that they want for nothing; surgeons, physicians, soup, or even money, if they need it";⁶ and later, "In God's name, take care of that poor St. Paul (one of the officers in question); if he wants money, give it him, and I will see that you have it back again".⁷

¹ Ramsay, *Histoire du Vicomte de Turenne*.

² Condé to Lenet, October 25, B.N.

³ * *Ibid.*, November 1, 1657, B.N.

⁴ * Conde to Auteuil, November 1657, A.C.

⁵ * Condé to Lenet, November 1, 1657, B.N.

⁶ * *Ibid.*, November 3, 1657, B.N.

⁷ * *Ibid.*, November 5, 1657, B.N.

Lenet did all that lay in his power to carry out these, and many other, varied directions ; but he, too, was suffering from the effects of the climate, and his answers, though more sympathetic, were scarcely more cheering than those of Caracena : " which ", Condé wrote, " are not of a kind to give me much relief ".

Winter quarters, bad or good, were at length provided for the whole army ; but the knowledge, when it came, could do little for the Prince, whose fever had now taken the most severe form ; the ' doubletertian ', in which the attacks recurred every day. He was moved from Bergues to Nieuport, where he grew worse rather than better ; and then to Ghent, to be lodged in the monastery of St. Pierre-les-Gand. " My health is no better here than at Nieuport ", he wrote ; " the attacks are no less violent. See to the numbers of the infantry regiments, and settle that matter for me, if you are an honest man ".¹ This letter is written in the Prince's own hand, but more illegibly even than usual ; and soon afterwards, Auteuil, who had sent a ciphered report of some negotiation, received the melancholy answer : " M. le Prince is in no condition to see your letters, and Servientis (Caillet's fellow-secretary) can do nothing but weep to see His Highness in such danger ".² For a week Condé's life was almost despaired of ; Madame la Princesse and the Duc d'Enghien were summoned, and the Papal benediction was specially dispatched ; but on December 7th, Caillet was able to announce to Marigny that a change for the better had taken place, and that Guénault, the Court doctor, who had that day arrived from Paris, gave some hope of recovery. " His Highness ", adds Caillet, referring to the time when the Prince's illness was at its height, " did, of his own accord, perform all the duties of a good Christian on such an occasion ".³ Guitaut—once known as the most reckless of the younger ' petits-mâîtres '—had been charged to tell Condé of his danger ; and the Prince, rather to the surprise of his attendants, had immediately sent for a priest, and had been fortified with all the rites of the Church.

The news that M. le Prince lay at the point of death

¹ * Condé to Lenet, November 18, 1657, B.N.

² Caillet to Auteuil, November 30, 1657, A.C.

³ Caillet to Marigny, December 7, 1657, A.C.

stirred the French Court to much excitement. On the whole, the prevailing feeling was not unsympathetic towards the rebel ; in five years his misdeeds had been partly forgotten ; while his punishment, in the present ruin of his fortunes, was complete enough to satisfy all but his fiercest enemies. Moreover, the power of ' the Sicilian ' could never be willingly acknowledged by French nobles ; and the saying of an anonymous wit is recorded, " that it was a pity M. le Prince should not die of grief, in order that Mazarin might die of joy ".¹ The Cardinal, though he was careful to show outward solicitude, affected for a time, in private, to believe that the reports of Condé's illness were exaggerated ;² but the detailed instructions which he sent to several officials, as to their conduct in case of the Prince's death, prove him to have been finally convinced otherwise. The King and the Queen-mother showed every sign of concern ; it was with their full approval that Guénault had left the Court, on receiving a summons from Ghent. In Condé's own family the emotion was more acute ; even Conti, enjoying the pseudo-glories that fell to him in the absence of the true head of his house, could scarcely hear of his brother's danger unmoved. Madame de Longueville had never ceased to correspond with the Prince, nor to make efforts for his reconciliation ; and now, the thought of his dying in misery and exile was intolerable to her : " You order me not to be anxious ", she wrote, " but I cannot obey you. I am more anxious than you can imagine. At such a time, the grief caused by your unhappy absence is terribly increased. I can find no consolation for the impossibility of hastening to where you are, with all the speed I could wish, to see you and to help you ".³ Feeling was quickened on all sides ; the Prince turned his thoughts to renewed prospects of an agreement, and a fresh stimulus was given to the negotiations for some private treaty, still maintained by his party in France.

Condé's progress towards convalescence was slow. Three weeks after Guénault's arrival Caillet reports to Auteuil that " M. le Prince still keeps his bed from weakness, and the giddiness caused by the fever " ;⁴ a circumstance which did not prevent him from writing

¹ Guy Patin, *Lettres*.

² Mazarin, *Correspondence*.

³ A.C., Madame de Longueville to Condé, November 14, 1657.

⁴ * A.C., Caillet to Marigny, December 28, 1657.

every day, and often twice a day, to give and to reiterate directions as to the distribution and provisioning of the troops. Early in the new year he was able to be moved to Brussels, and there recovered sufficient health to justify a hope that he might take the field again in the next campaigning season. No outward sign was given of wavering allegiance to Spain. "Your Majesty", he wrote to King Philip IV, "has given public and private marks of kindness towards me in my illness, for which I am profoundly grateful. I can only show my appreciation by devoting what strength I have regained to Your Majesty's service."¹

¹ * B.N., February 9, 1658.

CHAPTER XXII

THE DUNES

1658-1660

AMONG the archives of the Castle of Epoisses, in Burgundy, is a letter written in March, 1658, by Condé to Guitaut, whose correspondence with the Prince has been carefully preserved by his descendants. Condé writes that the troops have their marching orders, and gives various details as to their movements; and adds, seemingly as an afterthought: "I have seen Madame la Princesse de Barbançon, who sends you word that she is your humble servant".¹ No phrase could be less likely to excite suspicion; as has been shown, the letters exchanged between the Prince and his friends abound in such greetings; but, in this case, the message was far other than a mere polite sentiment, and had, in fact, no connection with 'Madame de Barbançon', or with any lady in the Netherlands. In a marginal note to the letter, Guitaut explains how, some days earlier, Madame de Longueville had sent Auteuil from Paris, with suggestions, approved by Mazarin himself, for a private treaty between M. le Prince and the French Government. During the past two or three years a succession of envoys had been secretly dispatched by the Cardinal to Madrid, with full powers to discuss terms of peace; and on each occasion, the fact of Condé's presence in the Spanish camp had barred the way to a conclusion. Don Luis de Haro, Prime Minister of Spain, demanded that the Prince should be treated as an ally of His Catholic Majesty, with a full claim to ask terms from France; the French envoys, each in turn, insisted that he could only appear as a rebel subject, ready to submit to his Sovereign's pleasure in the matter of punish-

¹ MS. copy at Chantilly, from the *Archives d'Epoisses*.

ment. Neither side would give way ; even that skilled and wary diplomatist, Hugues de Lionne, spent the whole summer of 1656 in negotiating at Madrid without making any appreciable impression on King Philip IV, or on Don Luis. The Spanish Government, faithless to Condé in the matter of money and supplies, was none the less staunch to the main point of their alliance ; no peace should be concluded which did not restore M. le Prince to the possession of his former honours and estates. Foiled in this direction, Mazarin showed himself willing to draw Condé into independent negotiations ; a design in which he was warmly seconded by the Longueville family and by Madame de Châtillon, all of whom would have welcomed the Prince's return to his own country, even at the price of his broken faith. For a time, Condé let himself be tempted. Exile had become misery to him ; the Spaniards had kept word with him on no single point but that of the actual alliance ; while those who chiefly urged this defection upon him represented some of the strongest influences of his life. Beginning in January, 1657, the negotiations fluctuated for many months, without giving Condé much hope of ultimate satisfaction, or apparently affecting his conduct in any way ; but, on his recovery from illness, in the early months of 1658, his friends renewed their efforts with so much determination that, as Guitaut's note bears witness, they came within an ace of success. Boutteville and Guitaut alone, of all the Prince's officers, had been admitted to the secret ; their orders were, if a treaty should be concluded, to conduct the troops under their command to Charleville on the French frontier ; if no agreement could be made, they were to march to the rendezvous appointed by the Spaniards. " We had our cipher ", wrote Guitaut ; " a compliment from Madame la Princesse de Barbançon was to signify the failure of the negotiations ; one from Mademoiselle d'Ostrade meant success ". The whole transaction was necessarily so shrouded in mystery, that the direct cause which led to ' Madame de Barbançon's ' message is not known. Possibly Condé may have been seized by some scruple of conscience, or, what is at least as likely, his demands for himself and for his French followers were such as Mazarin had no inclination to grant. In any case, the rupture for a time was complete ; negotiations

were broken off, and even the fact that they had existed was denied, as often as seemed expedient, by all those formerly concerned in them.

Thus it happened that in May of the same year, Condé, for the last time, gathered his forces, to take the field against the army of France. The condition of his troops, as well as of the Spaniards, was by this time deplorable ; whatever payments could be wrung from the Spanish Government were swallowed up, without producing any visible effect, in a vast gulf of debts and necessities. The whole country on which they depended for support was laid waste, and the inhabitants cursed the foreign powers who had brought such desolation upon them. Condé himself was as much the terror of public imagination now, in the Netherlands, as he had been in Paris, in the days of the Fronde. His outward appearance, at this time, fitted him, no less strikingly than his moral reputation, for the part ; worn almost to a shadow by his late illness, but still with the defiant carriage of the head, and the expression—half fierce, half mocking—which the sculptor has caught and immortalised, he seemed to represent, in his own person, the spirit of this last desperate stage of war. " You may easily guess ", wrote Guy Patin, the Paris physician, to a friend, " whether the country people are rejoicing over the Prince's recovery, and whether they will send tributes of gratitude to Guénault, for having tended him in his illness ".¹

Before the opening of the campaign, great pressure had been put, by Cromwell, upon the French Government, to direct all the energies of the army in the Netherlands upon the siege of Dunkirk. English troops, to serve with Turenne, and English ships to blockade the port, were to be furnished only on this condition. The obstacles to the siege were even greater than they had been when, twelve years earlier, Condé had added the conquest of ' La Rochelle des Pays-Bas ' to the list of his youthful triumphs ; but Mazarin dared not offend the most powerful ally of France ; the Protector demanded Dunkirk, and Turenne received orders that no pains must be spared to satisfy him. At the earliest date possible, the French army marched from Mardyck, conveying heavy artillery, with infinite difficulty, over flooded country ; and on May 29th, Dunkirk was

¹ Guy Patin, *Lettres*.



THE GREAT CONDÉ
(From a bust by Coysevox, in the Louvre)

[To face p. 488]

formally invested by a force of twenty-two thousand men. Mazarin had strained every nerve to raise supplies and reinforcements for a supreme effort ; since it was felt, on all sides, that on this enterprise there hung the issue, not of the campaign only, but of the war which, for many years, had drained the resources of both France and Spain. The importance of the occasion was heightened beyond all measure, in the eyes of the French Court, by the King's determination to shed the lustre of his presence upon the camp. He did, in fact, spend some weeks with the army at Mardyck, and would gladly have ventured on further new experiences ; but his advisers maintained that the risks of the siege would be too great for one whose personal safety must be considered above all things ; and, before Turenne advanced to Dunkirk, Louis was persuaded to return to Calais. Many of his courtiers, more fortunate than himself, were enrolled as ' volontaires '. La Mesnardière, writing a few years later, records, with the eloquence of his age, the exalted rank of the chief officers of both armies ; on one side, " the flower of the martial nobility of France ", led by " a General of great capacity, who bore a great name " ; on the other, " three Kings' sons "—namely, Don Juan, and the Dukes of York and Gloucester—and " the Premier Prince of the Blood of France, more renowned for great and famous actions than any commander of his country ".¹

Beside the nobility of France, at Mardyck and at Dunkirk, La Mesnardière does not fail to note the presence of " the confederate troops of the new English Republic ". The six thousand Ironsides who had disembarked, some months earlier, in Flanders, had suffered many losses during a winter spent, in miserable quarters, at Mardyck. They were now reinforced by four thousand men from England. Lockhart, one of Cromwell's officers, who had lately been appointed ambassador in Paris, left his diplomatic duties to undertake their command ; and with him, as second in command, was General Morgan, a veteran, not only of the Parliament Army, but also of the Thirty Years War. This new brigade of ' red-coats ', as their allies already called them, had less scope for displaying their fighting qualities during the siege of Dunkirk, than later,

¹ La Mesnardière, *Rélations Guerrières*.

on the field of battle ; but, from the first, their physical strength and courage, no less than their democratic independence of spirit, made a profound impression on the troops with whom they served. The Civil War, in England, had given the Ironsides little experience of the lengthy siege operations practised on the Continent ; their methods of assault showed more valour than skill ; and it was observed that ‘ after the custom of a nation heedless of danger ’, they spared themselves the labour of entrenching their camp. In this, as in other matters, they were a law unto themselves ; their own officers might issue orders, and enforce discipline, but woe to the foreigner who rashly attempted interference on any point ! This truth Louis XIV learnt to his cost, when, at Mardyck, happening to ride through the English camp, he came upon two or three soldiers maltreating a Frenchman. The King, never imagining that he could pass unrecognised, promptly seized his own subject by the collar, to drag him out of his tormentors’ hands ; but the Englishmen, instead of relinquishing their hold, jeered loudly at this richly dressed young man—this Amalekite—who thought to settle other folks’ quarrels by force. Louis, whose confidence in the Royal authority was unassailable, forbade his attendants to draw their swords ; but his dignity entirely failed to produce the usual impression ; more red-coats joined the fray, and he was in real danger of being roughly handled. To the astonishment of all loyal beholders, no thunderbolt fell from heaven ; instead, an English officer, hastening to the scene of action, recognised the King, ordered the men back to their quarters, and restored peace in an instant. “ Such danger to the person of a great King ”, wrote La Mesnardière, awestruck, “ must fill the imagination with amazement, and with horror ”. It was shortly after this adventure that the King was prevailed upon to withdraw to Calais ; possibly those responsible for his safety may have thought him in less peril from the enemy than from these barbarous allies, “ whom the most lofty and majestic aspect ever seen upon a throne, had not been able to check, in such an affray ”.¹ But if the Ironsides resisted all arbitrary claim to authority, they were ready enough to acknowledge valour and true worth ; as they showed by the fervent admiration they

¹ *Rélations Guerrières.*

bestowed upon Castelnau, the General in command of the section of investment nearest to the English camp.

News of the investment of Dunkirk reached Condé and Don Juan at Brussels. The Prince had by no means recovered his full strength, and still suffered from returns of fever ; so Mazarin, who had joined the King at Calais, reports, in a letter to Gramont. Don Juan had also been attacked by fever ; and, it need scarcely be said, was more disposed than Condé to consider the fact an excuse for inaction. "The Spanish army", wrote Mazarin, "has orders to take the field immediately ; Don Juan is unable to set forth, on account of his illness, but M. le Prince, in spite of a tertian fever, is resolved to start at once ; being enraged that the Spaniards have not taken more precautions for guarding the roads about Bergues".¹ Already, in the first days of the campaign, two minor French reverses, following each other in quick succession, had raised fresh hopes among the Spaniards. Neither incident reflected great credit on Spanish arms. The first was the betrayal of the fortress of Hesdin, by the arch-traitor Hocquincourt ; who, bribed once more to change his allegiance, entered into conspiracy with the Governor, and delivered the place to the Spaniards. The second occurred a few weeks later, when Marshal d'Aumont, with five hundred men, was enticed into Ostend by a false promise of surrender from the garrison, and made prisoner. What slight advantage may have been gained by such successes was more than discounted by the frame of mind produced, as a result, in Don Juan ; whom no arguments could now convince that his troops were not assured of victory in the future.

Condé, at the date when Mazarin wrote of him, had already set out to join the troops ; on June 8th he was at Ypres, the appointed rendezvous ; and on the 11th, at Bergues, where he attended a council of war, held the same day. Don Juan had at length sufficiently recovered to make the journey from Brussels, and to be present, with Caracena, Hocquincourt, and the Prince de Ligne. Two courses lay open for consideration. Either the Spanish forces could encamp between Furnes and Hondshoote, cutting off supplies from the besieging force, and giving time for their own artillery to come up from Ypres ; or, following the plan that had

¹ *Correspondance de Mazarin* (to Gramont and Lionne), June 8.

succeeded at Valenciennes, they could immediately advance to some point near the enemy's lines, and there take up a position, with a view to making an attack. Condé, knowing well the character of the country round Dunkirk, and the superiority of the French forces, advised the former course ; but Don Juan, as the irony of fate would have it, was now as unreasoningly eager at the prospect of action, as he had been apathetic before ; and declared his intention of taking up a position, among the sandhills, within a league of the French lines, without even awaiting artillery and ammunition. " I have no doubt whatever ", the Prince warned him, " but that the French will at once sally out from their lines to attack you ; and they will do so at a great advantage ; for the position you wish to occupy can only be held by infantry, and their infantry is far stronger than yours ". Don Juan maintained, with superb inconsequence, that there was no such danger ; that " the enemy would never dare to face the troops of His Catholic Majesty ". " You do not know M. de Turenne ", answered Condé ; " he has not his equal for profiting by opportunity, and no man ever blundered, in his presence, without suffering for it ".¹ No remonstrances, however, were of any avail ; Don Juan held to his point, and the Viceroy's decision necessarily carried the day. On June 12th, the whole force that he and Condé had mustered at Bergues—about fourteen thousand men—marched from Bergues to Zuydcoote ; and before nightfall, an advance guard had marked out the position to be occupied among the dunes.

It was during this operation that Hocquincourt, who, with the Duke of York, was in command of the advance guard, brought upon himself what his countrymen might well consider the judgment of Heaven. Deaf to all warnings, he resolved on provoking an engagement with a body of French cavalry which had been sighted outside the lines. The French, observing his advance, retreated towards their camp ; he followed, at the head of his troops ; and, coming within range of one of the enemy's redoubts, was struck dead by a musket-shot. Condé and Don Juan were inspecting the site of the camp, when word was brought to them that an engagement with a French skirmishing party was imminent. The Prince, who had small faith in Hocquin-

¹ A.C., MS. narrative of the action of Dunkirk Dunes.

court's powers of judgment, set off at full speed to recall him, but came up only in time to see him fall. The French were now, in their turn, advancing to the charge ; and it is told how Condé's first act was to dismount, and search the dead body of Hocquincourt for any papers which might be of service to the enemy, in case the body should fall into their hands.¹ Both the Prince, and the Duke of York, ran great risk of being taken ; but, after a brief skirmish, they beat an orderly retreat in safety, before the arrival of Caracena, who was coming up, with a detachment of cavalry, to support them.

In the course of the next day (June 13th) the Spaniards occupied their camp in the dunes, north of Dunkirk. They had marched from Zuydcoote in order of battle, and they encamped in the same order ; Condé on the left, nearest the canal of Furnes ; Caracena in the centre ; Don Juan on the right, close to the sea-front, where a higher range of sandhills gave protection from the fire of the English ships that were blockading the port. Between the Spanish camp, and the French lines, the sandy hillocks stretched for less than three miles ; yet so little did Don Juan anticipate attack that no entrenchments were even begun ; and foraging parties were allowed to leave the camp, as though no enemy had been within reach. Only Condé, and the Duke of York—those who had served with Turenne—knew, as surely as if the Marshal had told them his design, that Dunkirk, and all that the fate of the town involved, would be lost and won within the next twenty-four hours. The Duke of York, who was at supper, that evening, with Caracena, and other Spanish officers, reiterated to them his opinion that the French would either attack the camp that night, or force them to give battle in the morning. The Spaniards assured him that they desired nothing better : “ I know M. de Turenne ”, answered the Duke, “ and I can promise that he will give you satisfaction ”.²

In the French camp, the fact of the enemy's approach had been made known, and orders given to prepare for a general action. Of the twenty-two thousand men engaged in the siege, about one-third were left to guard the camp and trenches ; so that the force which actually took the field was little superior in numbers to that of the Prince and Don Juan. Turenne had no lack of

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

² *Ibid.*

talent among his Lieutenant-Generals ; in the order of battle which he now drew up and issued, the command of the thirteen squadrons which formed the left of the first line was given to Castelnau ; that of the right—also of thirteen squadrons—to Créqui¹ and Humières² ; two out of the four future Marshals to whom important posts were assigned. The centre of the first line was composed of eleven infantry battalions, under the Duc de Gadagne,³ another officer of great promise. On the left of the second line were ten squadrons under Count Schomberg ; the same who, though a Marshal of France, was afterwards known, in England and throughout Europe, as the follower of William III. On the right were nine squadrons, under the Comte d'Equancourt ; and in the centre, seven battalions, led by the fourth prospective Marshal, the Marquis de Bellefonds. Eight squadrons of the 'Gendarmes' were to support the infantry of the first line ; and in rear of the second line were four reserve squadrons, under the Duc de Richelieu. Between the centre and each wing a battery of five guns was to be posted, in advance of the first line. Of the seven English battalions, which were all in the centre, four were in the first, and three in the second, line. Those in the first line caused some disturbance by expressing, through their officers, a firm determination to accept no place, in the order of battle, but that of the left centre ; a post which, from time immemorial, had been held, in the French army, to belong by right to the regiment of Picardy. Turenne, unwilling to displease allies of such importance, was forced to 'make the (French) regiment hear reason', and the red-coats, finally, had their wish. Lockhart, satisfied on this point, took directions from Turenne in such good part, that he did not even stay to hear the Marshal's reasons for giving battle : " I have every confidence in M. de Turenne ", he told the messenger ; " he can explain his reasons to me, after the fight ".⁴ By nightfall, on June 13th, all preparations had been made ; and before midnight,

¹ François de Blanchefort, Sire de Créqui ; born 1623 ; fought at Rocroy, Thionville, Fribourg, and Nördlingen ; afterwards a Marshal of France ; held several important commands ; died 1687.

² Louis de Crévant, Marquis d'Humières ; born 1628 ; Marshal of France 1668 ; died 1694.

³ Charles-Félix de Galléan, Duc de Gadagne ; born 1620 ; held various commands ; left the service of France in 1675 for that of the Venetian Republic ; died 1700.

⁴ Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

Turenne's resolve was still further strengthened, by certain news which he received from the enemy's camp. A page, whom Bussy-Rabutin rightly describes as 'a little boy full of good sense', had been taken prisoner in the skirmish of the day before; the Spaniards, thinking him too young to be of consequence, had paid little heed to him, and he had effected his escape without much difficulty; not, however, till he had ascertained that part of the enemy's infantry, and the whole of the heavy artillery, were still on the road from Ypres. Turenne, roused from sleep to hear the boy's report, observed that, if he had not already determined on giving battle, this news would have decided him. As matters stood, no change was needed in the orders; the army was to march at dawn.

About five o'clock, on the morning of June 14th, word was brought to the Spanish camp that the enemy were leaving their lines. The troops were at once ordered to prepare for action; while Condé, and the Dukes of York and Gloucester, rode out, to reconnoitre from different points. Turenne was indeed ready 'to give the Spaniards satisfaction'. From the height of a neighbouring dune, or sandhill, the French forces might clearly be seen, advancing in full order of battle; the two English Princes did not fail to note, among them, the red-coated battalions, familiar to their eyes. Returning in haste to the camp, the Duke of York encountered Don Juan, roused at last, and asking "what could be the enemy's intention?" The Duke, with some difficulty, convinced him that Turenne was, beyond all question, resolved on giving battle, and would shortly be upon them. At this moment, they were joined by Condé, who added his testimony, to the same effect; then, briefly representing their own present disadvantage, urged Don Juan to retreat while there was yet time. The infantry, as he showed, might cross the canal of Furnes by a bridge which he had thrown across it the day before; the cavalry might pass along the sea-front, at low tide. Don Juan rejected the idea with scorn: "Retreat!" he exclaimed. "Monsieur, I am convinced that this will be one of the greatest days that ever dawned for the arms of Spain!" "It will be a great day enough", answered Condé, "if you will consent to a retreat".¹ Once more Don Juan persisted,

¹ A.C., MS. narrative.

till the Prince, in desperation, turned upon the young Duke of Gloucester, who stood near : " Were you ever in a battle ? " he asked abruptly. " No, Monsieur ", answered the boy, startled by this sudden attack. " Well ", said Condé, in his most incisive tones, " in half an hour you will see us lose one ". And, without another word, he turned from the group, going directly to his appointed post as leader of the left.¹

The Spanish line of battle extended from the canal to the sandhills on the sea-front, a distance of nearly three miles. Owing to the character of the ground, the troops were drawn up in a somewhat unusual order. The whole of the first line was composed of infantry, with the exception of the extreme left, where three of Condé's squadrons were posted near the canal. On the right was the key of the position ; a sandhill, higher than the rest, and slightly in advance of the line, held by three Spanish infantry battalions, of the regiment of ' Boniface '. In the rear of this first line, the cavalry was drawn up in four long lines ; the first three, of fifteen squadrons each ; the fourth, of fourteen. The command of these squadrons was divided simply into right and left ; there is no mention of a separate command in the centre. Condé, on the left, commanded twenty-two squadrons in all ; Boutteville, Guitaut, Persan, Meille, and Saligny, ' his bravoes ', as a writer of the time vindictively calls them, held the chief posts under him. On the right was Don Juan, with thirty-seven squadrons ; of these, the first line was commanded by the Prince de Ligne ; the second and third, respectively, by two Flemish noblemen, the Counts of Robeck and Bergues ; and the fourth, by the Spanish Count Salazar. Caracena commanded the infantry, whose whole strength amounted to six thousand men, as opposed to nine thousand on the French side ; a disadvantage for which, in a country of sandhills, the superior numbers of the Spanish cavalry by no means atoned.

As the French advanced, the unevenness of the ground obliged Turenne to make some alteration in his original order of battle ; the long lines of horsemen, on each wing, were forced to divide, and the cavalry finally advanced in seven lines, instead of in two. The Marshal had chosen his own place on the right centre,

¹ Duke of York, *Memoirs*.

between the infantry of the first line and the 'Gendarmes'. They came on slowly, much impeded by the loose sand and other natural obstacles, till, from a rising dune, the infantry of the left centre saw the enemy, in battle order, before them. Then General Morgan, commanding the English of the first line, pointed to the Spanish battalions which crowned the opposite sandhill, and called to his troops: "See, yonder are the gentlemen whom you have to trade withal!" "Upon which", says the General, in his narrative of the day, "the whole Brigade of English gave a shout of Rejoycing, that made a roaring echo betwixt the sea and the canal". The British cheer was new to the ears of Turenne's army; and so powerful was its effect, that special inquiry was made as to 'the reason of that shout'. "'Twas an usual custom of the Red-coats", answered Morgan, "when they saw the enemy, to Rejoyce". Cheers were raised again, when, as they halted in close order, the English troops saw Castelnau take his place near them on the left wing; and yet again when Morgan, before giving the order to attack, admonished his men that "the Honour of England did depend much upon their Gallantry and Resolution that Day". If this were true, the honour of England had never been in safer hands; for, when the word was given, the vigour of the red-coats' onslaught filled both armies with wonder and admiration. The English were the first troops, on the French side, to engage the enemy; since not only was the dune which they attacked the most advanced point of the Spanish line, but, in their eagerness, they disregarded Turenne's order to dress by the right, and, as Morgan admits, 'pressed forward upon their leading officers'. Colonel Fenwick, commanding the first battalion, halted, for a brief space, at the foot of the dune, that the men might take breath, and then gave the order to charge. The hillside was steep, and the loose sand hardly offered a foothold; but the red-coats, 'with a great shout', rushed upon the ascent, heedless of the hot fire of musketry which the Spaniards poured down upon them. Fenwick was one of the first to fall; his place was taken by Major Hinton, the second in command, who led the way, up to within a pike's length of the enemy on the summit. The Spanish infantry, as became their traditions, offered a determined resistance,

and for a time the issue was undecided ; but when a second English battalion advanced to the charge, the fury of the attack was irresistible : " They came on like savages ", so an officer of ' Boniface ' afterwards declared ; " there was no holding our ground against them ".¹ Castelnau, at the same moment, passed, with his squadrons, along the sea-front, to take the Spanish right in flank ; Don Juan had counted on the waves for protection, but the tide, receding sooner than he had reckoned for, left him exposed to attack. " These Islanders ", says La Mesnardière, of the English battalions, " being further stimulated by such prompt and vigorous assistance, redoubled their courage, and climbed the hill from all sides, with a resolution and fierceness beyond belief ". The Spaniards were driven back in confusion ; and the red-coats, " having planted their colours on the height, now, in their turn, flung down their enemies into the ditch beneath ; thrusting with their pikes, and slaying without mercy ".² The Spanish squadrons, taken by surprise, gave way before Castelnau's charge. Don Juan, who, for all his indolence, was no coward in the face of danger, made valiant efforts to check their flight, but in vain ; the rout was soon general among the cavalry of the right. Of the whole line of infantry, three battalions—those of ' Boniface '—were practically destroyed ; the remaining battalions, attacked by the troops of the French centre, and seeing themselves in imminent danger of being surrounded, beat a retreat in disorder, if not in actual flight.

Only on the left, where the troops had been the last to engage, the fortune of the day was still in doubt ; here, for a time, Condé held his own, or, in the words of Mazarin's involuntary tribute, ' s'opinâtra à son ordinaire '.³ His chief opponents were, nominally, Créqui and Humières, but he had a third adversary, at least as formidable, in his old acquaintance and friend, Bussy-Rabutin ; now serving as ' maître de camp de la cavalerie légère '. Bussy had been not a little dissatisfied that the command of the French right should fall to Créqui, rather than to himself ; but an order to lead the first charge had partly consoled him, and made him more anxious even than usual to prove his worth.

¹ *Correspondance de Mazarin*, June 17, 1658.

² *Rélations Guerrières*.

³ *Correspondance de Mazarin*, *loc. cit.*

Turenne's artillery had wrought great damage in the enemy's ranks, especially on the left, before the troops were fairly engaged ; and Bussy's charge upon the weakened squadrons drove back those of the first and second lines, in confusion, for a distance of some four hundred yards. The French cavalry broke their ranks in pursuit ; " but ", says Bussy, " I suspected that the matter would not end there ; particularly with the Prince, who, for such occasions, had resources beyond those of other men ".¹ Condé was not long in justifying this opinion ; by dint of great effort, he rallied his dispersed squadrons, while Boutteville and Saligny brought up the troops of the third and fourth line. At the head of these squadrons, Condé charged the pursuing force, and regained the ground he had lost. Three times the French came on, reinforced by troops from other parts of the field ; and three times he drove them back, following up his advantage further, at each charge, till Bussy was half prepared to see him fight a way through, at the head of his cavalry, and relieve Dunkirk, in spite of Don Juan's defeat. But no one man's endeavour could stay the destruction of that lost cause ; Turenne, watching his great rival's supreme, unavailing struggle, felt him, at length, within his grasp. Without leaving his post, he ordered up the troops of the centre, of whom several battalions had scarcely been in action that day ; with their help, Condé's force was surrounded on three sides ; while on his left, a network of wide, deep ditches, or ' watergans ', seemed to cut off all escape. The battalions of the ' Gardes Françaises ' and the King's Swiss Guards were posted on the sandhills, overlooking the line of Condé's advance ; and from their ranks, as the Prince once more led forward his squadrons, there poured, at close range, a terrific discharge of musketry, of which, in the words of an eye-witness, ' every shot seemed to tell '.² A moment later, Bussy charged the broken ranks, and completed their rout. Condé looked, for an instant, on the scene of ruin. His troops were destroyed, or in flight ; his own strength was completely exhausted ; his horse had been struck. Another moment, and he would have no choice but to fall into the enemy's hands. With desperate resolution, he turned his wounded horse, and rode straight at a ' watergan ' on

¹ Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

² *Ibid.*

his left ; the horse, by a last effort, cleared the ditch, and fell dead, on the far side. Condé was unhurt ; but, to quote from a contemporary narrative, " being still weak from his late illness, as well as breathless from his exertions, and from the shock of his fall, he was scarcely able to rise to his feet ".¹ Boutteville, who had followed him closely, hastened to his assistance, and, at the risk of life and liberty, offered his own horse as a means of escape. Condé refused safety at such a cost, but accepted a remount from a gentleman of his own household, the Comte de Groussolles. The foremost of the enemy, eager to complete their triumph by securing the person of M. le Prince, had already crossed the ditch, while others prepared to bar the way of flight ; and Condé, almost lifted to the saddle by Boutteville and Groussolles, owed his escape mainly to the swiftness of his borrowed horse. He passed, at a gallop, between two parties of horsemen, who were coming up to intercept him, and was soon beyond reach of pursuit, on the road to Furnes.

Boutteville paid the price of his devotion as surely as though his first generous offer had been accepted ; before he could mount and follow, the enemy had cut him off, and he was forced to yield himself a prisoner. Saligny was also taken ; Meille, mortally wounded, survived the action only a few hours. Turenne was not anxious to press the pursuit ; knowing, as he did, that both Condé and Don Juan were at the end of their resources, he feared little from the chance of their rallying the scattered troops ; and was more bent on reducing Dunkirk than on following up his advantage in any other direction. He might well rest content ; no victory could have been more complete. Yet, as it was freely admitted, on all sides, Condé's military reputation had suffered no hurt ; as at Arras and at St. Antoine, his personal credit emerged scathless from the midst of defeat. ' On ne peut pas mieux sortir d'une méchante affaire '—was the verdict of Bussy-Rabutin, than whom no one, on this occasion, was better qualified to give an opinion. Through many years, at first of friendship, and later, of both public and private differences, Bussy had cherished a keen appreciation of Condé's gifts as a leader of men ; but never—not even when, in the trenches before Mardyck,²

¹ A.C., narrative.

² See Chapter VIII.

he saw him 'like Mars in warfare'—had he admired him as when he fought this losing battle to a finish, in the full knowledge that the Spanish right and centre had been beaten off the field.

Condé met Don Juan and Caracena, on the evening of that day, at Furnes. Their losses and, still more, the total demoralisation of their troops, crushed all hope of imposing any serious check on Turenne's further progress. The struggle was over, and the ultimate triumph of France assured; the length of time during which hostilities might be prolonged could now only be a question of months. Taking into consideration the low standard of the time, in all matters of political and diplomatic morality, it might almost be reckoned to the credit of M. le Prince, that, throughout the months that followed, he held firm to his agreement with Spain, resisting the suggestions of his family and friends that he should disregard all claims of the alliance, and lose no time in concluding a treaty with France, to the best advantage he might. Pride, at least as much as principle, no doubt forbade a course which would have been even more humiliating than that of seeking terms from Mazarin, in conjunction with Spain. "On such an important occasion as the present I am determined not to fall below the level I have maintained in the rest of my life", he wrote, with sublime disregard of the darker side of his past history, to a partisan in France. "I have no wish to put a shameful end to my career; so long as I am in the hands of Fortune, I mean to go on as I have begun, and to degenerate in nothing".¹

For five months the Spaniards made shift to carry on the unequal contest of the campaign. All they could attempt, for the time being, was to ensure the safety of certain chief places. The troops were therefore divided; Condé marched to protect Ostend; the Duke of York and Caracena were ordered to Nieuport; Don Juan took up quarters at Bruges, and the Prince de Ligne at Ypres. Dunkirk capitulated on June 23rd; the besieged garrison fought bravely to the last, and inflicted a severe loss upon their enemies in the death of Castelnau, who was mortally wounded in an assault on the night of June 19th. Turenne, having duly handed over the conquered port to the English, proceeded to reduce, in rapid succession, Bergues, Furnes,

¹ *Archives d'Époisses.*

and Dixmuyden. Early in August he was joined once more by La Ferté, bringing troops from Lorraine and Luxembourg; the two Generals invested Gravelines, and, before the end of the month, had forced the Governor to capitulate. Next followed the fall of Oudenarde, and for a time it seemed as though the French would end their victorious march in Brussels itself; but Condé had left Ostend for the frontier, and Turenne, fearing to find his supplies cut off, contented himself with less brilliant conquests. By threatening Tournai, he drew the Prince de Ligne, with over three thousand men, from Ypres, only to defeat him utterly, a few days later, at Comines on the Lys. Ligne retreated again to Ypres, but his force was a mere shattered remnant, and the garrison, thanks to this loss, was in no state to resist the siege that Turenne forthwith laid to the town. Ypres capitulated, after a brief resistance, on September 25th. Throughout October and November the French forces ravaged the country between the Lys and the Scheldt, consuming its supplies, and reducing its fortresses to submission. Condé was, during the greater part of this time, with a small force at Tournai; whence, whenever occasion offered, he sent out detachments to skirmish with the French troops; but, as Turenne observes, "the army of the (French) King always maintained their advantage".¹ Finally, in December, the Marshal returned triumphant to Paris, leaving "one hundred companies of cavalry and five thousand infantry" to garrison the fortresses he had conquered. Once more we are reminded of St. Évremond's 'Parallel': "In the course of an action, Condé's deeds win greater praise"—how far more dramatic is his part than that of his adversary in the battle of the Dunes!—"but when the action is over, more lasting good is gained by the achievements of Turenne".²

No sooner was it evident that Spain must shortly be driven to negotiate, if not to sue, for peace, than Condé dispatched Lenet from Brussels to watch over his interests, and to represent him in whatever place might be considered the diplomatic headquarters of Europe. Lenet's first journey was to Frankfort, where the Diet was assembled, during the summer of 1658, for

¹ Turenne, *Mémoires*.

² St. Évremond, *Parallèle entre M. le Prince et le Vicomte de Turenne*.

the election of a successor to the Emperor Ferdinand III. France was represented at the Diet by Gramont and Lionne; and Lenet, though holding no official position in the assembly, had many opportunities of discussion with them as to the Prince's future prospects. In September, the proceedings of the Diet were concluded by the election of the son of Ferdinand, Leopold I, under conditions highly favourable to French interests; the new Emperor was pledged "to make no war, within or without the Empire, to the detriment of France"; and, above all, to send no assistance to Spain. Lenet then travelled to Madrid, where his presence was urgently needed; and where—to use his own words—he "spared no pains to procure His Highness all possible advantage, and laying aside a natural brusqueness of demeanour, studied and restrained his words and actions as he would in dealing with the very ill-tempered, acute, and jealous husband of a lady with whom he was deeply in love".¹ The terms of a peace treaty were now taking a definite form. France, for all her ascendancy, was, in truth, not much less anxious than Spain to conclude the war. The death of Cromwell (September 3rd, 1658) had relieved Mazarin from the anxieties and obligations which had gone far to outweigh the benefits of the alliance; but the resources of the country were almost exhausted; while the relinquishing of Dunkirk, as the price of help from England, had inflicted a blow on the national pride of France, for which the Cardinal was held personally responsible. Mazarin earnestly desired peace, and his wish was echoed throughout the country, where it was said that "no household could be found which did not mourn more than one loss".

Months passed in negotiations; but the details of the diplomatic contest which terminated in the Peace of the Pyrenees, have here no place, except in so far as they affected Condé's interests. In the voluminous correspondence dealing with the subject, the affairs of M. le Prince are more than once spoken of as 'the stumbling-block' which threatens to overthrow all attempts at concluding a treaty. Was his name to appear as that of an independent Prince the ally of Philip IV, or as that of a rebel asking pardon of his Sovereign? If France persisted in refusing him

¹ * A.C., Lenet to Condé.

the full restitution of his honours, which Spain felt bound to demand, would he be satisfied with benefits offered by the Spanish King? Condé himself answered the second question clearly enough. At one point Don Luis de Haro made a bold attempt to force Mazarin's hand by the suggestion, made through the French envoy to Madrid, that "His Catholic Majesty should give to M. le Prince the compensation which France has refused"; and that the said 'compensation' should take the form of the Governorship of the Spanish Netherlands, together with an independent sovereignty between the rivers Sambre and Meuse. This offer presupposed Condé's resignation, for himself and his family, of all claim to the estates and dignities which he had enjoyed as First Prince of the Blood; a possibility which he entirely refused to contemplate. "To say the truth", he wrote, in terms not often employed by a penniless and defeated exile, "I can think of nothing that would suit my wishes better than the County of Burgundy, as a sovereignty. I confess that, to gain so much, I would willingly give up my Governorship (of Guyenne), and my fortresses (those held from the French Crown), always provided that my friends were restored to whatever position they held in France before the war, and that I had permission to send my son to enjoy my possessions in France, and to hold my office of Grand Maître. Without these conditions I will neither relinquish anything nor listen to any suggestions concerning my affairs; they are points of honour on which I will not fail; no, not for my life. I will never resign, except in favour of my son".¹ Three alternatives, he declares, admit of consideration; either his own restoration to full honours in France, or the arrangement by which he was to rule in Burgundy, while his son enjoyed the dignity of 'Premier Prince'; or, failing these, "to be abandoned altogether, and to continue in this present state". No half measures would be accepted: "I will have none of those miserable posts (*ces meschants petits établissements*) which would be of no service to me, and only make it appear as though I had been compensated".

An ally in this frame of mind did not facilitate matters for the Spanish Minister, who had, at the same time, to contend with other difficulties of even greater

¹ B.N., Condé to Lenet, April 14, 1659.

European importance than the Prince's repatriation. Not only were territorial advantages at stake ; the terms of the proposed treaty were also to be influenced by the choice of a consort for the King of France. Louis was now in his twentieth year, and his ministers were emphatically of opinion that his marriage ought not to be longer delayed ; more especially as his brother Philip, the heir-presumptive, was rapidly developing a character wholly unfitted for a throne. The Queen-mother had set her heart on the consummation of peace through the King's marriage with her niece, the Infanta Maria Theresa, daughter of Philip iv. The prospect agreed with Mazarin's policy, but, at first, found no favour with Spain ; the Infanta stood near the succession, and the King, her father, did not welcome the possibility of France and Spain one day forming a joint kingdom. Mazarin, at the first sign of hesitation, brought forward alternative suggestions ; the future Queen of France might be a Princess of Savoy, or of Portugal ; either of which would have signified alliance with an enemy of Spain. As for Louis himself, he was chiefly anxious, at this juncture, to secure the consent of the Cardinal, and the Queen-mother, to his marriage with Marie Mancini, the most fascinating of Mazarin's nieces ; failing the fulfilment of his wish, he was comparatively indifferent as to which bride was presented to him by his ministers. The news that the French Court had journeyed to Lyons, in order that a meeting might take place between the King and the Princess Margaret of Savoy, alarmed Philip iv into making a definite offer of his daughter's hand. Acceptance was conveyed with as much eagerness as was consistent with dignity ; the Queen-mother was overjoyed ; and Mazarin, setting his reputation as a statesman before any family interests, prepared to crush, by force, if need be, his niece's hopes of sharing a crown. The Princess of Savoy was consoled for her fruitless journey by a present of ' a pair of ear-rings, in black enamel and diamonds ',¹ with other jewels ; she was pronounced to have borne her disappointment, on the whole, with fortitude, although, as she left Lyons, ' she shed a few tears, more of annoyance than of sorrow '.² The Cardinal's success, in this matter, did not dispose him to leniency towards Condé, whom he

¹ Mademoiselle de Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² *Ibid.*

felt to be increasingly in his power ; the preliminaries of a peace treaty, signed in Paris on June 4th, 1659, by him and by the King of Spain's envoy, were by no means of a kind to afford satisfaction to the Prince, or to his friends. Still, these were but the preliminaries. Mazarin had, even yet, a hard task before him, when, in July, he set out for the Spanish frontier, to meet Don Luis de Haro in person, and to decide the final terms of peace.

In May, a few days before the signing of the preliminaries, a ' suspension of arms ' had been proclaimed in the Netherlands, and Condé was free to turn his mind wholly to the conditions imposed on his return to France. Urgent private entreaties reached him to make some advance towards personal reconciliation with the King and with Mazarin ; or, at least, to authorise some such advance to be made, on his behalf, by his family and adherents at Court. Madame de Châtillon reproaches him with indifference to his friends' efforts : ' ungrateful as you are, I can never make up my mind to hate you as much as you deserve ' ¹ Madame de Longueville's appeal is more dignified, and probably more sincere ; conscious of her own share in the responsibility for Condé's present position, she implores him ' not to continue silent when all but the dumb would speak '. " How could I rest ", she asks him, " without representing to you that I am ready to obey all your orders, but that I cannot bring myself to see you perish—you and your poor child—and not beg you once more, if only for my own justification, to give me the means of serving you ? " ² Condé, at first, showed no eagerness to adopt a pacific tone, and indeed, the preliminaries of the treaty contained one clause which might well alarm those who longed for his return, at any cost. Among the restrictions and deprivations to be suffered as the penalty of rebellion, was included the confiscation of Chantilly ; the King was said to cherish a special predilection for this estate, which was to serve, henceforward, as a Royal residence. Condé was outraged ; he wrote of this exercise of power as ' a horrible insult ' to himself : " It is false ", he declared wrathfully, " that the King ever had any special liking for the place ; he has never wished to

¹ * *A.E.*, Madame de Châtillon to Condé, June, 1659.

² *B.N.*, May 13, 1659.

spend any time there, and whoever has made him go there now, did so for a special purpose".¹ Another disputed point, and one on which the Prince expressed himself even more forcibly, was the fate of his friends; he insisted that they should lose nothing by their fidelity to him, but should be restored to the full possession of their former titles and estates. "It would be a shameful thing for me", he wrote, "if I were seen returning to France, in possession of my estates, so long as there were any who had lost theirs, for love of me. It might be said that I had sacrificed their advantage to my own, and I will have no such accusations".²

Don Luis de Haro was scarcely more disposed than Condé himself to accept the preliminary terms without modification. In the famous conferences of the Isle of Pheasants (August–November, 1659), he fought manfully for the Prince's interests; and if, in the end, France gained the full advantage that Mazarin had resolved upon, it was at the expense of Philip IV rather than of his ally. By many devious paths of argument and dissimulation, and with the help of some active intervention, on Condé's part, a conclusion was reached at last. Besides the territorial concessions already agreed upon, Spain offered to relinquish the important frontier towns of Philippeville, Marienbourg, and Avesnes. These were to be placed, by His Catholic Majesty, in Condé's hands, 'as a recognition of his services'; and M. le Prince, in his turn, was to hand them over to the King of France, in exchange for the Governorship of Burgundy. The proposed confiscation of Chantilly was not enforced; all hereditary titles, estates, and revenues were to be restored to the Prince, with the exception of the fortresses which he had formerly held from the Crown, and of the Duchy of Albret; this latter reservation, however, represented no loss, for the lands of Albret were to be given in exchange for the Duchy of Bourbon. The offices which he had held otherwise than by hereditary right, Condé was justly considered to have forfeited; of these, the Governorship of Burgundy alone continued his, by special arrangement. The same conditions were obtained for the Prince's followers; their "lands, honours, and dignities" were restored to them, "provided that

¹ B.N., Condé to Lenet, July 3, 1659.

² B.N., Condé to Lenet, November, 1659. *Portfeuille du Prince de Condé.*

they were attainted of no other crime than that of following His Highness ". Like their leader, they were to be under no inhibition from holding any Government office in the future ; but their reappointment to any such office must depend upon the King's pleasure. Condé was pledged to hold no fortresses, and to maintain no troops ; the forces existing under his control were to be disbanded. Such, briefly, were the main points of the ten ' articles concerning M. le Prince ', contained in the great treaty. The territorial acquisitions of France, agreed upon in the general terms of the treaty, included the provinces of Artois, Roussillon, and Cerdagne ; and, in addition, a chain of fortresses stretching along the northern frontier, from Gravelines to Damvilliers. These advantages, together with the Spanish marriage, and the possibilities thereby involved, might well constitute a triumph for Mazarin's foreign policy, and atone for any concessions wrung from him on behalf of the rebel Prince.

Condé spent the months occupied by negotiations, for the most part, in Brussels. His position, during this time, became daily harder to support with patience or with dignity. All chances of his future happiness were at stake in the terms of the treaty ; yet to betray his intense anxiety as to his fate, his longing to be reacknowledged a French Prince of the Blood, to see France, and above all Chantilly, again, would have been to humiliate himself unbearably, and to increase his enemies' sense of power. His correspondence shows that there were moments when, to his friends, he owned the Cardinal to be ' maître de l'affaire ', and asked only that suspense might be ended ; but these were rare, and though he knew submission, in some form, to be inevitable, he was as firmly as ever resolved to achieve it, according to his own standard, without loss of self-respect : " What I must do, I will do with a good grace, but never so as to debase myself ".¹ In accordance with this principle, he forestalled compulsion, while the battle of diplomacy was still fiercely raging, by writing to Don Luis a formal request that peace between two great nations might no longer be delayed on his (Condé's) account. No further efforts or sacrifices were to be made on his behalf ; the King of Spain was to consider himself absolved, henceforward, from the promises

¹ Condé to Lenet, November 19, 1659.

included in the terms of their original alliance. Don Luis, still loyally contesting every reservation in the ten articles, hailed this solution with relief and joy. Six weeks later, the conferences were concluded, and peace was an established fact. Gramont had already left France, on a special mission to Madrid, to make the official demand, required by etiquette, for the hand of the Infanta ; whilst Louis, taking up his residence at Aix, in Provence, prepared to receive his bride.

On November 7th the Treaty of the Pyrenees was signed and sealed, and, before the month was ended, Guitaut had left Brussels, bearing a letter to the King at Aix, in which Condé made the formal submission and apology, exacted by the terms of the treaty, for having, " during some years, conducted himself in a manner displeasing to His Majesty ". This apology, judged by the standard of the time, expresses no deeper humility than Condé may actually have felt, at such a time, towards the being whom, in his heart, he never ceased to consider the greatest upon earth—a Bourbon King. " I had better have died ", he protests, " than have imagined anything contrary to the duty imposed by my birth, or to the service I owe to Your Majesty ; but, since Your Majesty is pleased to grant me the honour of approaching you, I hope, by my future actions, to efface the recollection of all that may have displeased you in my late conduct, and, by my submission to Your Majesty's wishes, to prove that I shall be all my life, unalterably, with all due respect, Sire, the most humble, most obedient, and most faithful servant of Your Majesty ".¹ A letter dispatched, at the same time, to Mazarin, probably represents a far greater struggle with pride ; M. le Prince asks the Cardinal's friendship, begging him " to make known to him the King's wishes on all points, and to lend his good offices for the regaining of His Majesty's favourable opinion ".²

The last weeks of Condé's exile were chiefly spent in desperate endeavours to pay off, as far as possible, the heavy debts incurred during the past seven years. No sooner was the news of peace made public, than his creditors, foreseeing his early return to France, pressed forward with their claims, thronging his ante-rooms, and repelling all efforts at temporisation : " I have

¹ A.C., Condé to the King, November, 1659.

² A.C., November, 1659.

nothing but words to give them ", wrote Condé, " and I have paid them with those for so long, that they refuse to accept such coin ".¹ Most of his officers were also, as he says, ' up to their ears in debt ' ; and, since more than one of them, on former occasions, had advanced him money, he was in honour bound to give them all the assistance in his power. Fortunately, some part of the sums, long promised by the Spanish Government to the Prince and his Generals, arrived in time to save them from the open disgrace of leaving unpaid bills behind them. Condé, freed from this reproach, took his final departure from Brussels on December 29th, in triumph and rejoicing, among signs of the citizens' universal good-will. With him were his wife and son, as well as his three principal officers, Boutteville, Coligny, and Guitaut ; the last-named had returned from France with passports for the journey. As the gates of the city closed behind him, all prospect of the difficulties and humiliations which must yet be faced vanished for Condé in the thought of all that he was to regain ; once more he could have written, as he had done at the time of the first ' suspension of arms ' : " I seem to see port after a long storm ".²

It need scarcely be said that the first act of reparation demanded of the Prince, on re-entering France, was that he should wait upon the King and receive the Royal forgiveness in person. This proof of loyalty required a journey of several hundred miles, for the Court was still established in Provence ; but, till so much had been accomplished, Condé would have felt it impossible to show himself publicly, either in his own domains or in Paris. The stages of his journey were marked by many greetings. At Soissons he found Puységur, whom he had last seen a prisoner at Valenciennes, and who now joyfully gave him the best entertainment in his power.³ Four days later, at Coulommiers, a more emotional meeting took place ; Madame de Longueville and her husband had come from their neighbouring castle of Trie, with a bodyguard of a hundred gentlemen, to do him honour. Seven years had passed since the parting between the brother and sister, and the Duchess may well have remembered Condé's prophecy that he would be ' the last to sheathe

¹ * B.N., Condé to Lenet, November 19, 1659.

² A.C., Condé to M. de la Neuville.

³ Puységur, *Mémoires*.

the sword'. Madame la Princesse and her children were left at Trie, when, after a delay of three days, the Prince continued on his way ; the Princess could have played no part at Châtillon-sur-Loing, his next stopping-place, where he spent two days as the guest of the Duchess Isabelle. Farther south, he was met by Gramont, to their great mutual satisfaction ; and lastly by Conti, whom he greeted, if not with enthusiasm, at least with a decent show of affection.

Towards the end of the journey, as the prospect of interviews with the King, and with Mazarin, loomed larger before him, Condé showed some characteristic anxiety as to the forms of precedence to be observed between him and the Cardinal, and the necessity of his formal presentation to the King by a third person. No doubt the certainty that such a presentation would not only be insisted upon, but must be made by none other than Mazarin, was one of the severest punishments that he had to endure ; but, when the momentous occasion arrived, the indignity was lessened by the strict privacy of the meeting. It was on January 27th (1660) that the Prince reached Aix, and proceeded directly to the Cardinal's lodging ; whence he was conducted to the Palace, and received by the King, and the Queen-mother, alone. Orders had been given to admit no other person to the presence ; Mademoiselle, greatly to her annoyance, was politely ushered from the Queen's apartments, as soon as the arrival of M. le Prince was announced. No eye-witness can be quoted as to the details of that interview ; though many, and divergent, reports as to the King's demeanour and utterances were afterwards circulated at Court. All that the records are agreed upon, is that Condé, as in duty bound, asked pardon on his knees for past offences, and that the King was pleased to grant it. As to the sincerity of such forgiveness, or the degree of Royal graciousness that was displayed, it is impossible to speak with assurance ; Louis himself, if he reflected on all that he owed, for good and ill, to the man who—worn, aged, and saddened—now knelt before him, must surely have felt some doubts as to his own feelings. He could scarcely realise, in that moment, the fact that this former rebel and renegade, was indeed prepared to be second to none, henceforward, in loyalty and devotion. For Condé, a new era had dawned. The power he had defied, was that of a

foreign Queen and Minister ; the King to whom he renewed allegiance was one who, no longer a child, fulfilled the Bourbon ideal to the letter ; and to whom he could tender, as he now did humbly, the unquestioning submission prompted by the instinct of his race.

PART III

CHAPTER XXIII

CONDÉ AND THE KING

1660-1668

THE years that followed immediately on Condé's return from exile, brought him, as was inevitable, no small share of disappointment and bitterness. Louis XIV was never known to grant true forgiveness on impulse. His inherent sense of fitness showed him the value and dignity of an outwardly magnanimous attitude; but, in his heart, he was not disposed to spare his cousin a single one of the lesser humiliations which might arise from the existing state of affairs. The bold statement, made by Mademoiselle, that Condé resumed his position at Court 'as though he had never left it',¹ cannot be accepted as unprejudiced; while Montglat's hostile declaration that the Prince, during his stay at Aix, 'played a rather indifferent part',² has at least some elements of truth. Mademoiselle herself had, two years since, been nominally restored to Royal favour, and her relations with M. le Prince had temporarily cooled, in consequence; but her liking for his society was unchanged, and she asked nothing better than to welcome his return. At Aix, as once in Paris, he took his place near her for the 'ball and comedy'; only, on this later occasion, the King was present, and joined graciously in their conversation: "while we laughed", says Mademoiselle, "over all the foolish things that we had done". This appearance of goodwill was enough to satisfy a Princess whose perceptions were not of the keenest; but Condé's greater acuteness allowed him no such illusions. No one knew better

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

² Montglat, *Mémoires*.

than he the ambiguity of his position, nor his enemies' readiness to take advantage of it. He saw clearly that, whatever compensation the future might hold for him, he could best guard against insult and misrepresentation, at the present time, by availing himself as little as possible of the permission given him to appear at Court. Therefore he refused, with all due deference, the suggestion that he should take part in the festivities of the Royal marriage, which was to be celebrated at St. Jean-de-Luz in a few weeks' time; and where, under the circumstances, even the most self-possessed of Princes must needs have found the joint presence of the Kings of France and Spain somewhat embarrassing. Conti was appointed to act as his substitute at the ceremony, while M. le Prince, having fulfilled his act of reparation towards the King, set out for Paris.

Chantilly, despoiled in the wars of the Fronde, was still uninhabitable, and Condé, though he had contrived to satisfy the tradesmen of Brussels, was still too heavily in debt, in other quarters, to contemplate its immediate refurnishing. St. Maur served him, once again, as a convenient retreat; here he took up his residence, and received such numbers of congratulatory visits as to cause Mazarin some anxiety. France gave M. le Prince a better welcome than that which had been granted him at Court. On his journey to Aix, from the frontier, he had caused it to be known that he would receive no official 'compliments' before he had seen the King; but on his way northwards he was greeted, in each town where he passed, with public rejoicings. Even the Parisians had forgotten his misdeeds; citizens of all classes flocked to gain a sight of the Prince, or to pay him their respects. Many of his former officers and companions-in-arms, presented themselves at St. Maur, and friendships were renewed, to all outward appearance, with surprising ease. But of all such interviews, none was more characteristic than that which took place between Condé and Turenne, and which the Marshal himself describes in a letter to Mazarin. "I was at St. Maur the day before yesterday", he writes, "where I saw M. le Prince. My whole visit passed off with the greatest civility on his side. There were a great number of people present. I was some time alone with him, in

a corner, where we talked of everything, even of the letters written near (the town of) Condé. I was very glad to see him, and he treated me with all possible consideration. I did not find him at all changed".¹ No words could better convey the mutual understanding between these two men, who had never been intimate, and whose natures differed from each other as widely as night from day. Turenne required no apology for the insults heaped on him in the letter of which he speaks; he was perfectly aware that Condé's anger had been directed, not against him, but against circumstances, and the idea of holding aloof at such a time, seems never to have occurred to him. Condé, for his part, received his late adversary with every mark of true regard, but without embarrassment of any kind. He relied absolutely on Turenne's powers of intuition, and the native assurance of a Bourbon stood him in such good stead that he was, in all probability, by far the more at ease of the two.

The Prince had, in truth, less difficulty in satisfying those who had lately been opposed to him, than those who had followed him in adversity, and who were keenly alive to their claims upon him. In his later years, he had no bitterer enemy than his sometime Lieutenant-General, Coligny-Saligny. Saligny, who had long been jealous of the favour shown to Boutteville and Guitaut, elected, soon after their return, to break definitely with Condé, and to accept a post in the personal service of the King. He waited on the Prince, in some trepidation, and informed him that he must no longer count on either his services or his friendship. Condé's revenge took a practical form. A further instalment of the indemnity paid by Spain had been sent to him, for distribution among his officers, and he forthwith declared that, since Saligny was no longer to be numbered among these, he should not touch one farthing of it. Fierce mutual threats and recriminations followed; Saligny complained publicly that he had been cheated by the Prince, and it was counted among Condé's humiliations that the King tacitly took part against him, by inflicting no punishment on one who dared to speak thus insultingly of a Prince of the Blood. There the matter rested; the money was never paid, and neither party, as far as is known, ever showed the

¹ * A.C., February 24, 1660.

smallest sign of repentance. Saligny, admittedly valiant, and fortified by the consciousness of Royal favour, took infinite credit to himself for encountering, without terror, the 'grands yeux furibonds' which Condé turned on him, whenever they met at Court. His resentment found an outlet in the vehement attacks, made in his *Memoirs*, on the moral character of the Prince, to whom he grudgingly allows 'only two good qualities—wit and courage'.

It should be added that there were times when Condé spared no pains in what he conceived to be the interests of those who faithfully shared his disgrace. His efforts on behalf of Boutteville's marriage to a rich, and singularly unattractive, heiress,¹ were worthy of a better cause; nothing could exceed the ingenuity and persistence with which the bride's relations were bribed, or bullied, into relinquishing any share in the family fortune. M. le Prince could no longer claim to be, as in his youth, the promoter of love-matches; a less romantic contract than that made between François de Montmorency-Boutteville, and Bonne-Thérèse de Clermont-Luxembourg, could scarcely be imagined. Yet all those concerned seemed fully satisfied; above all, the bridegroom, who, assuming in right of his marriage, the title of Duc de Luxembourg, felt himself deeply in the Prince's debt.

The seven years of Condé's exile had wrought many changes among the principal figures at Court. Retz, after an adventurous escape from captivity, still pursued political intrigues; but he was never again the familiar figure he had once been in the Royal circle. Madame de Longueville and 'La Palatine' had begun to turn their thoughts to the religious devotion which was to occupy their later years. Monsieur had continued in dreary seclusion, at Blois, till his death, which took place a few days after Condé's return. Mademoiselle wept for her father, but, as she naïvely remarks, her grief "proceeded more from a natural tenderness of heart than from the thought of any good that he had ever done her"; while the general indifference at Court is summed up in Madame de Motteville's observation that "he (Monsieur) had existed in that kind of disgrace which causes living men

¹ For all details concerning the marriage, see *La Jeunesse du Maréchal de Luxembourg*, Marquis de Ségur.

to be numbered, as it were, among the dead".¹ The obscure and melancholy end of this 'handsome prince, born for pleasure',² may well have brought home to Condé his own danger of a like fate, and strengthened a resolve that his retirement at St. Maur should be no more than temporary. He had realised that a return to public life would be beset with difficulties; but to be 'numbered among the dead' in his lifetime, was a prospect which no man of his temperament could have faced with resignation, at the age of eight-and-thirty. This feeling he expressed unreservedly in a conversation with the future minister, Colbert. Mazarin, deeply distrustful, kept unceasing watch, by deputy, over Condé's actions, and had appointed Colbert to report upon the state of mind in which he found him. There were, as Condé admitted, only two alternatives open to a Prince in his position: the first was to maintain friendly relations with the Cardinal; the second was 'to withdraw to one of his estates, and hunt hares'.³ As the latter appeared to him, not without reason, 'a most miserable occupation', he chose the former course, with little delay. Twenty years earlier, the dread of enforced inaction had driven him to submit to his father, and to Richelieu; just as now, urged by the same fear, he stooped to win and keep the friendship of Richelieu's successor.

The gorgeous festivities connected with the Royal marriage made the year 1660 ever memorable in the annals of the Court. M. le Prince took a prominent place in the procession which attended the State entry of the King and Queen into Paris (September 3rd); so also did M. le Duc—now once more known by his original baptismal name—and even Madame la Princesse, whose appearance, by the side of the young Queen, was remarked on as a possible sign of her husband's return to favour. It may be gathered, from Condé's correspondence, that certain of his near relations played a less conventional part on the occasion; the two sons of Madame de Longueville, aged, respectively, fourteen and eight years old, had set their hearts on viewing the procession from among the crowd; and their uncle was, apparently, not too formidable a person to be applied to for help, in such a case. "I hear", wrote

¹ *Mémoires*.

² Bussy-Rabutin, *Mémoires*.

³ * *A.E.*, Colbert to Mazarin, March 25, 1660.

Condé, to the Duc de Longueville, "that my nephews have the greatest wish to assist incognito at the King's entry, and that they are afraid of your disapproval. I cannot help asking you to allow them this pleasure, for I think that, at their age, no harm could come of it, and their presence will not even be known".¹ Unfortunately, no record remains to show whether the request was granted; but, in any case, M. le Prince had done his part.

While Condé showed himself to have realised at least one of the duties of an uncle, his devotion as a father was patent to all observers. His affections were more than ever concentrated on his son; for his daughter, 'Mademoiselle de Bourbon', died in September, 1660; thus putting an end to those premature designs for her future which had been discussed at the time of her birth. The *Archives of Chantilly* include a small collection of letters of condolence, addressed, on this occasion, to the Prince; among them one from the Abbess of Fontevrault,² lamenting the loss of 'that little Princess, who was your joy, and my hope'; and one, also, from the Duc de Mercœur,³ who had himself lately lost an infant son; and who, forgetful of past injuries, wrote, with a pathetic note of sincerity: "I have proved how heavy such a blow can be to a father who loves tenderly; and I know, too, that in such misfortunes there can be no consolation except that which comes from Heaven, and from such courage as yours". But no loss of a daughter could be an irremediable grief to the Prince, while he still had his son. Enghien's education, his marriage prospects, and the possibilities of his military career, were matters for ever-increasing thought and preoccupation. Reports of M. le Duc's precocity, and of his achievements at the Jesuit College, had been so freely circulated that when, a few months after his return, Condé brought him to be presented to the King, the Court expected a prodigy of learning and accomplishments. The Duke, with all his intelligence, scarcely succeeded in maintaining such a reputation; the impression made by him on the existing powers was far other than that made by his father, when, as a boy of sixteen, he had first appeared before Richelieu. Certain intellectual characteristics were, no doubt, common to both father and son; but this

¹ *A.C., June, 1660. ² *A.C., October, 1660. ³ *A.C., October, 1660.

later Duc d'Enghien had neither the genius, nor the vitality, which had supplied, in Condé, the want of more strictly amiable qualities, and which had made him the idol of the 'petits-maîtres'. The dark inheritance of mental disease, which Claire-Clémence, in unconscious revenge for her injuries, was to bequeath to her son, did not reveal itself in his early youth; the only disadvantage which, so far, he seemed to have acquired from her, was that of his exceedingly small stature. Military capacity he had none whatever; personal courage was his only qualification for a soldier's career; but for social purposes he was admitted, by no less severe a critic than St. Simon, to have wit enough to supply any physical defects. Such was the son whom Condé, in the opinion of his contemporaries, 'loved to the point of folly'; and the advancement of whose fortunes he now held second to no other object. For Henri-Jules de Bourbon it may at least be said that he was sincerely proud of his father, and that he felt for him as much affection as an essentially cold nature allowed; the two formed a firm alliance, offensive and defensive, on all occasions when mutual support was required.

Condé's powers of maintaining friendly relations with Mazarin were not long put to the test. The Cardinal's health had failed, even before the strenuous labour of the peace negotiations; and within little more than a year of their conclusion, his life was despaired of. His last days were devoted, in the midst of great sufferings, to the claims of religion; and to the disposal of his immense fortune, which was mainly divided between the King, and the various members of the Mancini family. To the King, Queen, and Princes, he distributed jewels from among his possessions; to Condé he gave a large diamond, 'with many compliments, and marks of friendship'.¹ The memoirs of the time show unmistakable resentment on the part of the writers at the magnificence with which this foreigner, in ordering the affairs of his family, left high offices, as bequests, to his nieces, or to his nephews-in-law; and not less at the honours paid him in his death; the forty hours of intercession,—made, as a rule, only for Kings,—and the depth of the Court mourning, which was the same as that worn for a Royal prince. The King, who gave way easily to becoming emotions,

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

showed every sign of grief ; but the Queen-mother, " stronger than her son, and disillusioned by her knowledge of the weakness of all creatures ",¹ seemed the less afflicted of the two. The exact nature of her past relations with the Cardinal is still the subject of dispute and speculation ; but, in any case, she could scarcely fail to foresee the difficulty of her own position if dissension should arise between a minister accustomed to supremacy, and a King who, sooner or later, would refuse to be haulted of his power. To the nation at large, the Cardinal's death appeared as an even greater cause of rejoicing than the late peace ; the feeling was voiced in a last effusion of Mazarinades :

" Enfin le Cardinal a terminé son sort.
 Français, que dirons-nous de ce grand personnage ?
 Il a fait la paix, il est mort :
 Il ne pouvait pour nous rien faire davantage ".

Mazarin breathed his last on March 9th, 1661 ; and for the twenty-four hours that followed, conjecture was rife as to his successor. All suspense, however, was ended by the King's announcement of his resolve to be ' his own Prime Minister ', and to conduct business directly with the heads of the chief Government departments. The three to whom he first gave his confidence, and who formed the ' Conseil d'en haut ', to the exclusion even of Princes, were Le Tellier, Minister for War ; Hugues de Lionne, Minister for Foreign Affairs ; and Fouquet, Minister of Finance. This council was shortly to suffer changes ; Le Tellier was succeeded by his son, who made famous the title of Louvois ; the fall of Fouquet opened the way for the ministry of Colbert. But the King's principle of government continued the same ; the Princes of the Blood, although they retained an honorary place in the general privy council, had no claim to share in the ' secret d'affaires ', or inner workings of the State.

A ' coup d'état ' of this importance, executed with the consummate dignity and assurance of which Louis was already master, could not fail to make a deep impression throughout the kingdom. With one stroke, the King had established his supremacy, and had raised a barrier for the throne, against any future ' party of the Princes '. It was freely said that the new system

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

had been primarily devised with a view to excluding Condé, in particular, from affairs of State; and it is certain that he was more likely to suffer from it than any other French Prince then living. Still, though he gained nothing in official power by the death of Mazarin, his social position was immediately simplified; he could now visit the Court without having to give place to his former enemy. At State ceremonies, and also in the more intimate gatherings at St. Germain, or at Fontainebleau, the Prince became, once more, a familiar figure; changed, indeed, from the days of his insolent youth, and waiting on the King with a deference too sincere to be servile. Courtiers watched in admiration, when the Royal party took their 'collation' in the open air, on board a gilded barge, moored in the river; and when—as one spectator describes it—M. le Prince, fulfilling his hereditary duties as 'Grand Maître de France', served the King at table "with so much respect, and yet with such an air of pride, that, remembering past events, it was impossible to see him act in this manner and not to praise God for our present peace".¹ The picture of reconciliation was completed by the presence of Beaufort; who, since the barge was too small to admit officials of inferior rank, himself took the part of the Prince's assistant, and passed him the dishes to be offered to the King. A new golden age had dawned at Court; more brilliant, even, than the days of 'la bonne régence'. Each day brought its special diversion for the young King; while a forecast of the still distant future is heard in Guy Patin's censure: "They talk much, at the Louvre, of ballets, and rejoicings, but nothing is said of relieving the people, who continue to die of want".² Acting, and dancing, were the chief Royal pastimes of the hour; Louis, conscious of good looks and majestic deportment, loved nothing better than to display himself, before a rapt audience, as a central figure in a masque, or ballet; and the time spent in devising and rehearsing these entertainments, gives cause for wonder as to how affairs of State ever received more than the most cursory attention. An atmosphere of youth and gaiety pervaded the whole Court; a new generation of courtiers had arisen, and the King was surrounded by companions of his own age. If the young Queen,—a typical Infanta

¹ Motteville, *Mémoires*.

² *Lettres de Guy Patin*.

of the seventeenth century,—lacked animation, and rated formality too high, her place, as a leader of amusements, was ably filled by a bride of very different character; Henrietta Stuart, Princess of Great Britain, whose marriage to the King's only brother took place early in 1661. The new 'Monsieur' and 'Madame', as they were designated, were installed at the Tuileries, and became at once a centre of interest. The King, who was said to entertain 'a natural antipathy to the English', looked, at first, without much favour on his brother's marriage, but was soon won by the charm of Madame; a charm which is summed up, by a not too friendly critic, as being 'beyond description, in all that she said and did';¹ and it was Madame who proved indefatigable in the organisation of balls, masques, and hunting-parties.

Condé, despite frequent attendance at Court, stood definitely aloof from the group of younger Princes and Princesses. By the King's wish, he took part in the great 'carrousel', or fancy-dress tournament of 1662; when, leading the 'quadrille des Turcs', he made, by all accounts, a most excellent figure; but the 'carrousel' was an affair almost of State importance, and inclusion was a mark of Royal favour rather than of appropriateness in age or disposition. M. le Prince had put youth behind him; and though, to the end of his life, he sought, and enjoyed, certain forms of social intercourse, his past years had left him, at last, neither health nor spirits for revelry. At forty, his place was with those of an older generation; he was the father of a grown-up son; and middle age had been prosaically inaugurated for him, even before he left Brussels, by his first attack of gout. Such a fate was by no means uncommon among his contemporaries; gout, in some form, and at an early age, was an almost universal complaint of the class to which he belonged; nevertheless, he confesses to it with some shame, and an obvious sense of incongruity. It was "a slight misfortune, hardly worth mentioning", he explained, in a letter to Madame de Longueville, "namely, the gout, which attacked me, for the first time, in the foot and knee". "The pain", he admits, "was the most cruel in the world, and lasted for four days; but now it has passed, and has only left a slight weakness, which diminishes every day. You

¹ Montpensier, *Mémoires*.

would have laughed at me once ; but I think that now you will be sorry for me, and attribute it to the judgment of Providence. Let me beg you to do neither ; for I suffered too much to make you laugh, and I am not wicked enough to deserve such a punishment ".¹ More than one writer of the time makes allusion to the Prince's ill-health and wasted appearance after his return. But neither age, nor any other restraining influence, could check certain characteristic propensities in him. When, through the Queen-mother's exaggerated anxiety, the young Queen was thought to be dying, after the birth of her second child ; and when, according to custom, the whole Royal Family assembled to see her receive the last rites, it was largely through Condé's fault that the solemnity of the occasion was marred ; for, while the Queen's almoner, and some others, made extravagant display of their grief, Madame—gaily incredulous—arrived without a sign of affliction, wearing yellow ribbons ; and M. le Prince, moved, no doubt, by the contrast, not only laughed himself, but made others follow suit. Clearly, the dignified Grand Maître was not, even now, to be wholly dissociated from the Prince of the Fronde.

Louis showed himself an apt pupil of Mazarin in his treatment of Condé, and in the skill with which, while showing him outward favour, and giving him no cause to absent himself from Court, he inflicted perpetual reminders of the past. The Prince was admitted to the intimacy of the Royal circle ; at the Chapter of the Saint-Esprit, held in 1661, he was invested with the order, and was even allowed to nominate Guitaut for the same honour. Yet all the while he felt, as the King intended he should feel, that his position was insecure. All the Court knew that the First Prince of the Blood could not depend on securing either advancement for his friends, or punishment for his enemies. The investiture of Guitaut was closely followed by the King's open, though tacit, protection of Coligny-Saligny ; concerning which Bussy-Rabutin observes that ' he (Condé) suffered some such annoyance every day '. Urged by repeated mortifications, the Prince allowed his mind to dwell on a prospect which, some years earlier, had first been tentatively laid before him. This was none other than

¹ A.C., August 2, 1659.

the possible election, of himself or his son, as successor to the crown of Poland. Marie de Gonzague, the friend of his early youth, had passed an eventful life since the day when she left Paris in state, to share the throne of a King whom she had never seen ; but neither time, nor distance, had severed her friendship with the House of Condé. Her position in her adopted country was, to say the least, unusual. Two years of marriage with King Ladislas VII had established her firmly, as their Queen, in the eyes of her Polish subjects ; and when, in 1648, the King's death left her a widow, she had fulfilled the expressed wish of the people by marrying his brother and successor, John-Casimir II. Since that time, she had been less a Queen-consort than an actual ruler ; but even her energy had waned with the passing of years, and with the ceaseless struggle against Turkish and Muscovite invaders. John-Casimir threatened to abandon the contest ; and the Queen, realising that their joint abdication might at any moment become an accomplished fact, set about seeking a candidate for election as his successor. Her thoughts turned immediately towards France, and towards Condé ; who, when the earliest overtures were cautiously made to him, shortly before the peace of 1659, was in a state of complete uncertainty as to his future. Henri-Jules was, at first, the suggested candidate ; but his youth, and entire dependence on his father, made him a mere pawn in the game, and all decision rested with the Prince. Condé temporised ; as has been seen, he would consent to nothing which might imply willingness to relinquish his claims in France. Queen Marie, however, was not to be discouraged. A new scheme was framed ; her niece, Anne of Bavaria, that same daughter of ' la Palatine ' to whom Condé had stood godfather in 1647, was to be adopted as heiress to the crown ; a marriage should be arranged between the Princess and the Duc d'Enghien, and he, as her husband, should be elected to rule conjointly with her. This proposition, which was advanced soon after Condé's return from exile, met with more definite favour ; the Royal sanction was asked, and obtained ; and the Duke's name was openly pronounced before the electors. Then followed a period of uncertainty, while Poland was torn by opposing factions, who pressed, respectively, the claims of a French and of an Austrian Prince. The Queen never

wavered in her championship of the former ; her only doubt was as to whether, in this time of storm and stress, M. le Prince himself would not meet the demands of the nation more satisfactorily than his son. Condé, being approached on the subject of his own candidature at a time when he almost despaired of regaining his lost prestige in France, signified some willingness to accept the offer, under certain conditions. One decision he expressed openly ; he would not appear as his son's rival, or do anything which might stand in the way of his advantage. A second—no less powerful—he kept to himself ; the crown of Poland was to be looked on as a last resource ; one to be discarded, without hesitation, in favour of a return to the full privileges of a Prince of the Blood. It was this latter consideration which, in the end, prevailed. Queen Marie's wish was not destined to be fulfilled ; but the possibility of his election was, for some years, a factor in Condé's life, and exercised no small influence in the private affairs of his House.

Foremost among the consequences of the Polish negotiations was the marriage of the Duc d'Enghien to the Princess Anne of Bavaria. The all-important question of a suitable alliance for his son had occupied Condé's thoughts ever since peace had given him leisure. Mademoiselle d'Alençon, one of the four younger daughters of the House of Orleans, had been mentioned as a possible bride, and her family were eager for the match. Mademoiselle declares that she herself, as well as her young half-sister, was approached on the subject, and that the Prince was ready to ask her hand for this boy of little more than half her age ; but there is no evidence to show that Condé himself ever authorised such a suggestion. The marriage with Princess Anne commended itself to him on several grounds, apart from any possible result on the Polish succession. Firstly, the Princess was a fitting match, in point of rank, for his son ; secondly, she was heiress, if not to the throne, at least to the private fortune of the Queen, her aunt ; thirdly, she represented, in her generation, two of the most sincere and lasting friendships of his life. Such an alliance was, needless to say, primarily one of policy and convenience ; but Henri-Jules needed no such coercion as that which had been used to bring about his parents' marriage. He was incapable of strong affection, and

his wife could scarcely, under any circumstances, have been a happy woman ; but, being fully assured of his own advantage, he played his part as a suitor with great conviction. And, if the chief contracting parties were merely passive, their elders showed a genuine pleasure which was founded, not only on self-interest, but also on real mutual regard. Condé was not sacrificing his son, as he had himself been sacrificed, to a feared and hated power. Of his future daughter-in-law, as an individual, he knew as little as he was likely to know of a girl of sixteen, who had been seldom seen at Court ; but he had full certainty that she came of a family well equipped with good looks, intelligence, and courage. The marriage negotiations, interrupted from time to time, but never abandoned, were finally completed in December, 1663. The wedding ceremony took place in the private chapel of the Louvre, and in the presence of the King ; the bride's jewels, which were part of the dowry given by her aunt, called forth the admiration of all beholders. " At length the happy day has come, to which I have so long looked forward ", wrote Condé, in a rose-coloured account of the proceedings, to Queen Marie ; " on Tuesday last, my son had the honour of becoming related to Your Majesty. . . . Nothing could exceed the affection and esteem which these children have for each other, and I would give anything in the world for you to be able to see them ".¹

Whatever the Prince's domestic shortcomings may have been, he was never accused of neglect as a father-in-law. From the day of his son's marriage, he superintended the affairs of the young couple with a care unusual even in those days, when the head of a family was expected to take his duties seriously, down to the smallest detail. The Duke and Duchess passed their time either at the Hôtel de Condé, or at Chantilly ; for the castle had once more been set in order, and M. le Prince, presiding over a patriarchal establishment, played the parental rôle as though he had known no other. Once in every two or three weeks, he dispatched a letter to Poland, informing the Queen of all his household news, and of how ' *ma fille* '—as he invariably calls his daughter-in-law—is acquitting herself. The choice of attendants, and of a confessor,

¹ * A.C., 1664.

for Madame la Duchesse ; her dress, her health, her looks ; all are discussed with the most unfeigned interest. Great praise is given her for her docility ; perhaps no very surprising merit ; for though the Prince treated her with consistent kindness, it is difficult to imagine a young girl refusing obedience to such a father-in-law. " My daughter's conduct is the best in the world ", so he assures her aunt ; or again, " She (the Duchess) has received, with proper respect and submission, Your Majesty's directions to go earlier to bed. Your Majesty knows the habits of young people, and it is true that she is inclined to keep late hours ; but she is so obedient that she does all she is told, without trouble ".¹ Madame la Duchesse was fated, indeed, to pass her life in doing as she was told ; the Prince's fatherly rule was to be succeeded by the harsh, and even brutal, tyranny of her husband's later years. She had not inherited her mother's strength of character, or of intellect ; and no qualities less pronounced could have gained her any influence in the household of Chantilly.

A more engrossing topic of correspondence even than the Duchess, was presently supplied in the shape of her first child. Condé, who, at two-and-twenty, had been frankly more interested in the taking of Thionville than in the birth of his eldest son, showed himself, at just twice that age, the most enthusiastic of grandfathers. His hopes of a grandson are reiterated in his letters ; together with his anxiety lest his ' daughter ', like some other young Princesses, should be dangerously overtired by the gaieties of the Court. " I do all I can to oblige her to take care of herself ; and as she is not so fond, as Madame is, of running about, I hope she may be more fortunate ".² The possibility that, when the expected event took place, he might be as far distant from Paris as St. Germain, was not to be contemplated ; he writes of ' a great alarm ', when he was hastily summoned, on his way thither, and returned without delay.³ Madame la Duchesse gave birth to a daughter⁴ on February 1st,

¹ Egerton MSS., British Museum.

² * *A.C.*, 1665, Condé to the Queen of Poland.

³ * *A.C.*, January 28, 1666.

⁴ Marie-Thérèse de Bourbon ; married 1688, to her cousin, François-Louis, Prince de Conti.

1666 ; and not all his regrets for the longed-for heir, could prevent the Prince from welcoming his grandchild ; he was even able to find beauty in an infant of four days old ! “ The mother and child are well, thank God ”, he informs the Queen ; “ the little girl is very pretty, and gives every promise of long life. Your Majesty may believe that I was a little distressed that it was not a son, and I do not doubt that you, too, will be sorry, but we have every hope that there will be no lack of them in the future ”.¹ He describes the young mother as ‘ terribly afraid ’ lest her aunt should be annoyed over the sex of the child ; “ as for me ”, he adds, a few weeks later, “ I am already quite consoled, and I love her as much as if she were a son ”. The progress of the new ‘ Mademoiselle de Bourbon ’ is a constant theme. She was soon, according to her grandfather, ‘ the prettiest child in the world ’ ; and Queen Marie, beset by failing health and political difficulties, may have been cheered by references to ‘ my granddaughter, who is cutting her teeth without any inconvenience ’.²

Side by side, in the Prince’s letters, with these details of the nursery, are matters of international importance ; as well as the latest news and scandals of the day. He tells, among other events, of the ‘ accident prodigieux ’ which has befallen the English nation in the Great Fire of London, and comments on the behaviour of Queen Henrietta Maria, who received condolences on the subject ‘ d’un air fort gaillard ’, as though the loss involved were a mere trifle to her son.³ The gossip of the Court plays a large part ; it was through Condé that Queen Marie learnt of Madame de Châtillon’s clandestine marriage to the Duke of Mecklenburg, and of the King’s passion for Mademoiselle de la Vallière. Here, too, the exploits of Madame find a place ; her romance with the Comte de Guiche, whose brilliant social success was amply justifying Condé’s predictions ; and her encounter, over certain compromising letters, with Madame de Soissons (Olympe Mancini), in which the two ladies heaped abuse upon each other, till they came almost to blows. The nieces of Mazarin had yielded none of their pretensions since the Cardinal’s death ; another letter describes the struggle for precedence between the Duchesse de

¹ * A.C., February 5, 1666.

² * A.C., April 28, 1667.

³ * A.C., September 30, 1666.

Bouillon, a girl of twenty, youngest of the Mancini sisters, and the Princess of Baden; when the Duchess took the higher place by main force and agility, and refused to relinquish it under any consideration; "a story", observes the Prince, "which is amusing to those who have no personal concern in it, and will make Your Majesty laugh".¹

This stream of public and private information ceases only with the death of Queen Marie, in 1667. For herself, the prolonging of life could have brought no happiness; yet it is impossible not to regret the breaking of a correspondence which shows M. le Prince in such an unwonted light; and especially that she did not survive till after the birth of a little 'Duc de Bourbon' (November, 1667), when the grandfather's joy and pride must have found the strongest possible expression. Her death took place during a time of mourning both at Court and in the House of Condé; the death of Conti (February, 1667) had followed closely on that of the Queen-mother. There had been no love lost between the two brothers, but family feeling supplied, to some extent, the want of personal affection; Condé took his brother's children—two sons—under his protection, and showed himself a careful, and even affectionate, guardian.

The death of the Queen-mother, after a prolonged and terrible illness, sent a wave of strong emotion through the Court. Whatever faults may be imputed to Anne of Austria, either in her administration, or in her private life, she did much, in her last sufferings, to atone for them. Her courage and resignation called forth tributes far different from the conventional praises bestowed, in a crisis, on most Royal personages; and of these, none was more sincere, to all appearance, than that paid by M. le Prince. The scene has been described, with graphic detail, by one who was present; the dying Queen, about to receive the last Sacraments; the King, Princes, and Princesses, entering, in solemn procession, and grouping themselves about the room. Condé, leaning on the balustrade at the foot of the bed, saw the Queen, as she fulfilled her part in the rites of the Church, transfigured by the joy of 'this sacred and mighty act'; and heard her give her last words of advice to the King, 'with the

¹ * A.C., January 1665.

authority of a Queen, and of a mother'. In that moment, the Prince forgot alike all past resentment, and all temptation to flippancy. He turned to Madame de Motteville, who stood beside him, and said, in a sudden impulse of admiration: 'I have never seen anything so beautiful! There is a woman who deserves to be honoured everlastingly!'

Possibly it was the recollection of those words which caused his hearer to affirm, as confidently as she did, that M. le Prince was never wholly indifferent to religion. At the time of the Queen-mother's death, he was still far from any outward profession of faith; but the changed views of Madame de Longueville, and of that once resolute sceptic, 'la Palatine', had not been without effect. Madame de Longueville, especially, was tireless in her efforts for his conversion; efforts which he received always with interest, but sometimes with amusement. It was often remembered how she persuaded him to come and hear, with her, the eloquence of Bourdaloue, who was to preach before the Court at St. Germain, and how he revenged himself. The vespers which preceded the sermon were long, and the Duchess, notwithstanding her piety, fell asleep. Condé, seated beside her, observed her, with silent triumph, until the preacher had mounted the pulpit; then whispered suddenly in her ear: "Alerte, Madame! voici l'ennemi!"—an alarm which roused her with such a start, as to confess her slumbers to the whole congregation.¹ Yet, even while he laughed, he owned the power of a faith which could so influence a woman whose intellect he had always respected: "I know nothing of devotion", he said to one who spoke of religion as a resource of inferior minds, 'but I know that my sister is not a fool'. He had never ceased to maintain friendly relations with the Jesuit fathers, who had been the instructors of his youth; and it was to him that the Queen of Poland, some years before her death, had entrusted the choice of a confessor, from that order, who was to be dispatched to Warsaw, for her spiritual needs. Condé executed the commission with great care: "I have talked much with the Father Superior, and with the best men of the order", he wrote to the Queen, "and they have recommended two, the Fathers Borin and Jourdan, as the most

¹ Villefore, *Histoire de Madame la Duchesse de Longueville*.

capable of serving Your Majesty. Father Borin is more versed in the ways of the world, but Father Jourdan is more learned, and a better preacher. M. Desnoyers (the Queen's emissary) and I shall see them again; they certainly both have great merits".¹ It was to a Jesuit tutor that the Prince, in due course, confided the education of his grandson; and, partly through this means, the religious element came, by degrees, to play a considerable part in his household.

The matter of the Polish succession was brought to a climax shortly after Queen Marie's death, by the definite abdication of John-Casimir. For years Condé, sheltering himself behind his Sovereign's wishes, had carried on the policy of temporisation, while his supporters in Poland laboured on behalf of his candidature. Of late he had inclined decidedly towards the possibility of leaving France; more especially since, in March, 1664, the command of a French contingent, dispatched to oppose the Turks in Hungary, had been withheld from him and bestowed upon Coligny-Saligny. But now, just as a kingdom seemed within his grasp, it needed only the prospect of another active command in the French King's service to make him fling it aside; and that with as little compunction as his kinsman, Henri de Valois, had shown when, lured by a far greater temptation, he forsook the crown of Poland for that of France. The brief and almost bloodless struggle, known as the War of Devolution, between France and Spain, was to bring the longed-for recognition of Condé's new loyalty, and to reinstate him, in the eyes of all men, as a trusted subject of the King.

The claims which gave rise to the War of Devolution were first urged by France on the death of Philip iv of Spain (September, 1665). The heir to the throne was a child of four years old, the son of Philip by his second wife. Louis and his ministers immediately claimed that while, in Spain proper, the male heir might hold undisputed sway, yet in the outlying provinces, such as the Spanish Netherlands, together with Luxembourg and Franche-Comté, the ancient feudal 'law of Devolution' still prevailed; and that, according to this law, some portion of these territories should pass to the Infanta Maria-Theresa, Queen-consort of France—as the child of Philip's first marriage—rather than to any

¹ * A.C., 1664.

child of the second marriage, whether male or female. It was true that the Infanta, on her marriage, had renounced all rights of succession ; but this renunciation was held to be conditional upon the payment of her dowry ; a sum which certainly had never passed to France from the coffers of Spain. The Spanish Government, needless to say, rejected the French claim as invalid. War was formally declared towards the close of 1666 ; and, in the spring of the following year, Louis prepared to lead his troops, in person, into the Netherlands.

Condé, at the time, was ill with a severe attack of gout and fever at Chantilly, and could scarcely hope to take a part in the coming campaign ; but he derived some consolation from the ready permission accorded to M. le Duc, to follow the King as a ' volontaire '. Soon there were rumours, growing by degrees to a certainty, that the King's favour was to be still further extended ; Enghien, serving with the army, was treated with a marked graciousness which augured well for the head of his House. In July, during the course of a successful campaign, Louis found time to return for a few days to Compiègne, and to hold a private interview with M. le Prince, whose attitude towards the Polish crown appeared changed from that time. Three months later, it was publicly known that Condé had received orders to lead an army to the conquest of Franche-Comté. Louis had realised the danger of cutting such a subject adrift ; and Condé, in obeying the Royal command, consulted his own wishes no less than his sense of obligation towards his Sovereign. His abrupt change of front caused no little perplexity to his supporters in Poland ; whose appeal for a final decision coincided almost exactly with the interview at Compiègne, and who were left to marvel at the unfavourable tone of his reply, until the news of his appointment solved the mystery. Then, while the Polish electors decided to cast the lot upon a countryman of their own, Condé's friends pressed forward with such eager congratulations as showed the significance of the King's action to be clearly understood. Gramont, La Ferté, and Puységur, were among the foremost to express their satisfaction. Condé, as he prepared for war, was probably nearer complete happiness than he had been since the day that he left Brussels. Not only was he assured, in the way which, of all others,

he would have chosen, that the King was confident of his loyalty ; but his son was to serve under him, while Luxembourg¹—now also employed for the first time since their return—was appointed his Lieutenant-General. In the face of such a prospect, the attractions of the crown of Poland seemed few indeed.

The office of Governor of Burgundy had given the Prince some knowledge of the adjoining province of Franche-Comté, its fortresses, and its inhabitants. He knew that sudden invasion would find its defences unprepared ; therefore, he resolved on the unusual course of opening a campaign in mid-winter ; three months, at least, before the earliest date at which his enemies looked for his advance. The success which followed this decision seemed almost magical ; if Condé hoped to initiate his son into the dangers and glories of a hard-fought campaign, he was doomed to disappointment, for, thanks to the swiftness and secrecy of his preparations, the French forces met with no resistance worthy of the name. The Prince spent the early winter months at Dijon ; ostensibly occupied with the affairs of the Government, and with elaborate negotiations over the possible neutrality of Franche-Comté. On February 2nd, these negotiations, which had been intentionally prolonged until all was in readiness, were abruptly broken off ; and, not twelve hours later, the invasion had begun. Luxembourg was ordered to march from Dijon on Salins ; and Roche, Governor of Chalons-sur-Saône, on Bletterans. Condé, taking a route a few miles to the north, crossed the river Doubs at Rochefort, and advanced upon Besançon. He was ably seconded by the Comte de Chamilly, a gentleman of Burgundy, who had served him for many years, through good and ill fortune, and who now led the cavalry of his advance guard. Chamilly seized the bridges at Rochefort, and at Pesme ; on February 6th, he was before Besançon ; and Condé, coming up on the following day, received the capitulation of the town. Luxembourg and Roche were no less expeditious. Salins, taken unawares, surrendered without a blow, and its fall, together with that of Bletterans (February 3rd), assured the conquest of the southern part of the province. Dôle and Gray were the chief

¹ Boutteville was known as Duc de Luxembourg from the time of his marriage.

fortresses still to be subdued. Of the two, Dôle was the more formidable, and it was here that Condé and Luxembourg joined forces, on February 10th, in presence of the King, who had hastened from Paris to the scene of victory. The operations that followed might well serve as a model for one of the many contemporary paintings in which Louis, merely by a commanding gesture, inspires terror in the heart of each enemy. Dôle capitulated, almost, it might be said, before he had time to strike the appropriate attitude; at Gray (February 19th) the triumph was repeated. A deputation, arriving in the name of the province, tendered submission to the King; Franche-Comté became, forthwith, a French possession, and Condé was appointed its Governor. Three weeks only had passed between the beginning of hostilities and the King's victorious return to his capital.

To a soldier of Condé's achievements, the campaign of the War of Devolution, in its military aspect, could appear as little more than a farce; the value it possessed, in his eyes, was in the King's implied favour and confidence. In May of the same year, to the astonishment of all Europe, the Peace of Aix-la-Chapelle restored Franche-Comté to Spain, and quenched all present hope of more serious warfare. Louis, in the phrase of his countrymen, '*reculait pour mieux sauter*'. While relinquishing Franche-Comté, he retained his conquests in the Netherlands; and, having successfully established a disregard of his wife's renunciation, in this case, he had every hope of eventually pressing a claim to the Spanish throne. Moreover, the Triple Alliance, lately formed between England, Holland, and Sweden, warned him that his strength might soon have to be directed against other enemies. Luxembourg, eager for a fresh command, wrote indignantly of 'this accursed peace'; but Condé accepted the situation with unlooked-for calm. He had been admitted, for this occasion, to the inner workings of the State council; he knew that when war came—as it assuredly would come—the King could not afford to dispense with his services.

CHAPTER XXIV

THE DUTCH WAR

1668-1673

FOUR years passed, before the Prince's expectations were fulfilled by a new declaration of war. The time sped, for the most part, uneventfully in the House of Condé; but in the third year, there occurred that strange and terrible episode which, on some points, has so successfully defied all inquiry; the attack on Madame la Princesse.

Since her return from exile, the life of Claire-Clémence had come to be haunted by an element of mystery, of which few, beyond her own household, were aware. The outside world merely observed that her son's marriage seemed to have made her of even less account, in the general scheme of things, than before. Up to that time, notwithstanding her husband's neglect, she had always, as far as the family fortunes permitted, received the social consideration due to her rank. Visits of ceremony were paid to her; and, to quote the general opinion expressed by Mademoiselle, "she was like any other person". Latterly, however, she had lived in almost complete retirement; "so forsaken, that she saw scarcely anyone". This change seemed to most of those who remarked it, no more than a result of the bridal importance bestowed on Madame la Duchesse; but the Prince's correspondence places it in a sinister light. "Send me word particularly of my wife, and of whether her fits of passion (*ses emportements*) still continue"; he wrote to Caillet, in October, 1664; "M. Perrault tells me that she spoke to him with moderation; but I doubt it, for I hear from others that she is anything but moderate".¹ Violence in any form, was so foreign to the Princess's natural disposition,

¹ A.C., October 7, 1664,

that these allusions, at first, seem hardly credible; but an explanation was only too easily forthcoming. Her mother, Nicole de Richelieu, had lived for years hopelessly insane; and the dread inheritance was to be handed down to each generation of her descendants. The first indication of the fact that Claire-Clémence suffered from a mysterious illness occurs as early as 1653; when the Prince, writing to Lenet, at Bordeaux, reiterates the demand that nothing may be kept back from him. If, as seems probable, this illness was, at least partly mental, she had since had long intervals of apparently complete recovery; but the danger had not passed away, and the letters of 1664 refer to her symptoms as to an acknowledged fact. Further inquiries, made at the same time, seem to be understood as relating in some unexplained manner to the Princess's mental state. Condé asks Caillet for information concerning a certain Duval, formerly 'valet de pied' in his wife's household: "Try, at all costs, to find out what has become of Duval, and whether my wife did not see him at St. Maur".¹ No reason is specified for such watchfulness; but the name of Duval was fated to play a leading part in the Princess's tragedy. On the night of January 13th, 1671, all Paris was startled by the rumour that an attempt had been made, at the Hôtel de Condé, to assassinate Madame la Princesse; that she had been severely wounded; and that, of her two assailants, one was Duval, and the other a page still in her service. The report, though exaggerated, was mainly true in effect; so Condé found, when he was summoned in haste, from Chantilly, to a house of confusion and terror. A quarrel had arisen, in the private room, and in the presence, of Madame la Princesse, between Duval and one of her pages; a young Bussy-Rabutin, cousin to the writer of memoirs. Swords were drawn, the Princess flung herself between the combatants to separate them, and was wounded, though not seriously. Her shrieks, and the sound of fighting, attracted the rest of the household, some of whom recognised Duval and Rabutin in the act of escape.

This bare outline of a much-discussed incident is fully supported by contemporary evidence; as is also the fact, subsequently disclosed, that one or other of these men had been surreptitiously receiving sums of money

¹ A.C., October 7, 1664.

from the Princess. As to further detail, it is impossible to speak with certainty. Some declared that Duval had been overheard demanding money with threats, and that Rabutin had drawn upon him ; others reversed the parts, and made Duval the Princess's defender. The voice of scandal affirmed positively that one or both had been her lovers, and that she was wounded in her attempt to protect the more favoured ; Bussy-Rabutin the elder, in a letter to Madame de Sévigné, complacently accepts this theory, and is only troubled by the thought that his cousin's supposed rival should be of obscure birth. Nothing is known of the former life of Claire-Clémence that could in any way justify such a suspicion. If she was guilty, it may safely be assumed that she was no longer responsible for her actions ; but to contemporary scandalmongers, ignorant of the mystery that surrounded her, the opportunity was too obvious to be missed. That M. le Prince, whose domestic failings had for thirty years been notorious, should now be presented to the world as a deceived husband, with his own servants as his rivals, was to them a stimulating possibility indeed ; one openly revelled in by the scurrilous publications of the day. Condé's furious indignation, and his merciless treatment of the accused, only gave additional colour to the report. Exactly what he knew or believed, as to his wife's conduct, has never been brought to light ; but it was enough to rouse his feelings towards her from cold dislike, into vindictive anger. All pity was merged in resentment against the woman who had been thrust into his life against his will, and who, not through her fault, but through misfortune, had now brought disgrace and ridicule, as well as the curse of insanity, upon his House. On two points he was resolved : the first, that his wife, whether innocent or guilty, should be removed beyond the reach of observation and scandal ; the second, that her affliction, with all its terrible significance for his family, should be hidden from the world. So long as he achieved these objects, he cared little for public reproach ; the accusations of injustice and inhumanity brought against him were greater even than he deserved ; but to the end of his life, he made no attempt to palliate them by explanation. His first act was to demand the punishment of Duval and Rabutin ; and a ' *lettre de cachet* ', or warrant, from the King, which would enable him to put the Princess

under restraint. Rabutin made good his escape ; Duval was captured, tried, and condemned to the galleys. The charge brought against him of drawing his sword in the Princess's presence, came under the head of ' lèse-majesté ' ; and had it been proved that she was wounded by his hand, he must have been sentenced to death. But, since, on this point, the chief witness could only be Claire-Clémence herself ; and since she, being questioned, steadily refused to make any deposition whatever, the evidence had, perforce, to be declared incomplete.¹

After his brief visit to Paris, on first hearing of the affray, Condé never saw his wife again. The King had no sooner signed the required warrant than it was acted upon, without the smallest consideration for the feelings of its victim ; although the Princess's mind was certainly clear enough, at intervals, to gather something of the fate in store for her. M. le Duc visited her, on January 15th, accompanied by Roches, Captain of the Prince's guard, and by the parish priest of Chantilly ; both of whom witnessed, then and there, the document signed by the Princess, in which she made over to her son the whole of her worldly possessions. This paper, which is still preserved at Chantilly, conveys the Prince's authority for the transaction, and also the agreement that the Princess shall have, for her lifetime, the use of such personal belongings as jewels and furniture. A month later, she was removed from Paris to Châteauroux, a castle in a remote part of Berry, one of the family possessions acquired by Henri II, Prince of Condé. Here, until the day of her death, twenty-three years later, she lived a life of imprisonment, varied only by visits from a few trusted agents, who bore special permission from the Prince. There is no reason to believe that she suffered from neglect, or from any ill-treatment, except the loss of liberty. Her household was conducted on the same scale as in Paris ; an ample sum of money was set apart for the purpose. She was allowed the freedom of walking and driving in the neighbourhood of the castle, but the rule of supervision was inexorable ; she was never left alone. No member of the Condé family is ever known to have visited her. Once, on hearing a rumour that the Princess was ill-used in her captivity, Madame de Longueville sent the Abbot

¹ *Régistres criminels du Parlement*, Paris, January, 1671.

of St. Germain,¹ as a confidential messenger, on a mission of inquiry ; with the result that the charge was satisfactorily disproved.

In the whole matter of the attack on the Princess, public sympathy was directed against Condé, and still more, perhaps, against his son ; who seems, on this occasion, to have been credited with almost more than his share of responsibility. As a matter of fact, Henri-Jules had done no more than act as his father's tool ; but his ready acquiescence made a lasting impression on a society whose standard of duty was considerably higher for a son than for a husband. With regard to the infamous charges preferred by Bussy and his fellow-gossips, those who were ready to believe the Princess guilty, held that M. le Prince had forfeited the right to be severe ; those—and they were many—who believed her innocent, could only feel that she was the victim of gratuitous tyranny. It was not till generations had passed away that the slight, but unmistakable, allusions in the letter to Caillet were brought to light. Désormeaux, who had access to the *Archives of Chantilly*, was the first biographer to bring forward the theory of the Princess's insanity ; but his unvarying strain as the Prince's panegyrist, has caused modern historians to distrust his statements. The evidence left by Tixier, Abbot of St. Germain, in a detailed account of his visit to Châteauroux, is of more value ; the Abbot's impressions corroborate Condé's letter, and would seem to leave no room for further dispute.² No defence is possible of the methods that the Prince employed ; his wife's mental state may have justified him in placing her under some restraint ; but, as far as can be discovered, he made not the smallest effort to ascertain how far she was responsible for what had passed, or how much she was likely to suffer from his treatment of her. The most that can be said is that he acted from a more definite motive than that of wanton cruelty, which was long attributed to him. Had the Princess been in a normal state of mind, he would have had practically nothing to gain by imprisoning her ; during the whole of their married life, he had so completely ignored his chief obligations towards her, that she could

¹ Père Tixier, formerly Sub-Prior of St. Denis ; see Chapter XVII.

² See *Trois familiers du Grand Condé*, by J. Lemoine and A. Lichtenberger.

never have been said to act as a check upon him, except by the mere fact of her existence ; and that, nothing but her death could remove.

So long as the Royal warrant held good, there was no power on earth that could prevent the Prince from banishing his wife to a living death ; but for him to forget her was impossible, so long as their joint descendants were before his eyes. By the irony of fate, her mental and physical characteristics had an influence on his race, more marked and lasting than any qualities of his own. He lived to see repeated, in his son, the signs of incipient madness ; and, in his grandchildren, the almost dwarfish stature which, at the time of his marriage, had caused uneasiness to an earlier Princess of Condé. Well might Charlotte de Montmorency feel the misgivings of an anxious mother, at sight of the twelve-year-old bride ;¹ and timidly remind her husband that the choice of a wife for their son was, when all had been said, ' a matter that would affect his whole life '.

However strongly Condé's action might be disapproved by his contemporaries, their opinion in no way affected his position at Court. Within four months of the Princess's removal to Châteauroux, he received a supreme mark of the King's personal favour, in the shape of a Royal visit to Chantilly. The festivities prepared for this occasion ranked pre-eminent, even among the many lavish entertainments of the time. The chief credit, for invention and organisation, falls to Henri-Jules ; who, if he could not set an army in the field, had a power, which amounted to genius, for marshalling households, and devising forms of display. The House of Condé was renowned for an excellent and original taste in these matters ; and, at such a time, its members might be expected to surpass themselves. The visit lasted some thirty-six hours (April 24th-26th), and its cost amounted, in the coinage of the day, to upwards of fifty thousand crowns. " Never ", wrote Madame de Sévigné, " were such expenses incurred at the triumph of any Roman Emperor ; nothing is counted ; all ideas for beauty are accepted, without thought of the cost ". One thousand crowns were spent on the flowers with which the ground was strewn. Every corner of the castle was requisitioned for the accommodation of the King's retinue ; it was even said that courtiers slept

¹ See Chapter III.

in the tool-sheds. A great part of the entertainment had been planned to take place in the open air,—a rash conception for the month of April ; and, for some days before the 24th, the rain poured in torrents, causing fearful anxiety to all concerned ; but the evening of the King's arrival was so fine, that a stag-hunt by moonlight was carried through, with great success. Then followed supper, served in illuminated gardens, on lawns carpeted with jonquils ; and finally, a display of fireworks. During the supper, a slight accident occurred, of which both the King and his host were, at the time, quite unconscious ; but which gave rise to as tragic and disconcerting a proof of loyalty as ever marked a Royal progress. The well-known story of the death of Vatel is a perfect illustration of the extreme to which the cult of ' la personne du roi ' could be carried ; and of the nervous tension produced, as a result, by the august presence. Vatel, most famous of ' chefs-de-cuisine', ' most capable of men, and one with a head worthy of affairs of State ',¹ had lately entered the service of M. le Prince, and was entrusted with the whole responsibility of the commissariat for the King's visit. Each meal entailed the serving of no fewer than twenty-five tables ; and, at two of the least important, on that first evening, the supply of one course fell short. Vatel, worn out by the preparations, which had caused him weeks of hard work, and many sleepless nights, was filled with unreasoning despondency, and declared that his reputation was lost ; he should never recover his self-respect. In vain the Prince, hearing of his distress, sought him out and encouraged him, telling him that " all was well, and that nothing could have been more perfect than the supper served to the King ". " Monseigneur ", answered Vatel, " your goodness overwhelms me ; but I know that the roast meat gave out, at two tables ". Next day was a Friday, and prodigious efforts had been made to secure an adequate supply of salt-water fish ; no easy matter, when the distance from Chantilly to the coast is considered. Vatel had sent orders to all seaports within reach ; and at four o'clock in the morning he was astir, to inquire the result. The first load to arrive was so small as to be negligible ; Vatel inspected it with dismay, and asked to see the rest. A servant who stood near, answered, not knowing

¹ Madame de Sévigné, *Letters*, April 24, 1671.

that further instalments were expected, that no more was to be had. This was the final stroke. Vatel saw disgrace and ruin staring him in the face ; in a frenzy of despair, he withdrew to his room, locked the door, and ran, like an ancient Roman, upon his own sword. An hour later, supplies of fish were arriving from all sides, till the kitchens overflowed ; Vatel was sought everywhere, to give directions, and at length, when his door was broken open, was found, a corpse. Never, surely, was the host of Royalty in a worse predicament than M. le Prince. Fortunately, both he and his son were of a temper well able to cope with such difficulties ; Henri-Jules, though he is reported to have wept with sheer vexation, wasted no time in giving way to agitated feelings ; his orders were issued with such skill and promptitude, that Vatel's absence was scarcely felt. The whole programme of the visit was carried out, unchanged ; the castle and gardens were ' a scene of enchantment, perfumed with jonquils ' ;¹ and, by the evening of that day, the morning's disaster was almost forgotten, excepting as a tribute to the supreme importance of the King's entertainment.

That Condé, who, ten years earlier, had abandoned all hope of ever freeing himself from debt, should now be able to defray the expenses of such a visit, was due, not to any economies of his own, but to the untiring energy and acuteness of Gourville. Lenet had grown old, and his powers of endurance, as the Prince's man of business, had failed at last. Gourville, plausible, intelligent, and not over-scrupulous, proved himself an ideal successor ; he had long since attracted favourable notice, and it was to him that Condé, while sojourning at St. Maur on his return from exile, had confided the difficult task of keeping Mazarin assured of his loyalty. ' What shall you tell the Cardinal ? ' M. le Prince had asked, laughing, as Gourville, primed with instructions, departed for the Court. " I shall tell him all that is likely to please him, of what Your Highness has said to me ", promptly replied Gourville ; " and also, all that Your Highness would have said, if you had had as much time to think of it as I shall have, between St. Maur and Toulon ".² Which eminently tactful answer so pleased the Prince, that he followed Gourville's career with unflinching interest ;

¹ Madame de Sévigné, *Letters*, April 26, 1671. ² Gourville, *Mémoires*.

and, some years later (1669), asked for his assistance in regulating the financial affairs of his household. The state of Condé's exchequer was, at that time, nothing short of deplorable ; old debts had accumulated interest ; new ones had been incurred, and no system of accounts had been followed. Almost the whole dowry of Madame la Duchesse had been squandered in buying land, to increase the value of the Chantilly estate ; while creditors, still unsatisfied, thronged the doors in even greater numbers than in the days of exile at Brussels. Condé found their presence more than ever inconvenient, since escape had become physically difficult ; he was often so lame with gout that he could not pass through the ante-room without the support of two servants ; and during this slow progress, each man had time to press a claim. Finding the situation intolerable, he gave Gourville unlimited powers for regulating his expenditure, and quieting as many as possible of the more urgent demands ; first commissioning him to obtain the remainder of the indemnity still owed by Spain. Gourville journeyed to Madrid, and there wrung from an unwilling Government the sum of thirty thousand pistoles ; then, returning, set himself to make searching inquiry into the claims of each creditor. Judging by results, it seems probable that a certain number of these claims were triumphantly disproved ; of the rest, some were satisfied with ready money, and some with charges upon distant estates. In spite of Gourville's assurance that he " always had the satisfaction of being warmly thanked by those with whom he had dealings ", it seems doubtful whether his methods would bear close scrutiny ; but they were, at least, so far successful, that the Prince's establishment was adequately maintained, and his ante-room cleared of unwelcome visitors. It was this latter circumstance—he told Gourville—that pleased him most ; so long as creditors were kept out of sight, he asked no more. Thenceforward, he left the management of his whole revenue to his new man of business ; only stipulating that a certain sum should be set aside, each year, for the improvement of Chantilly. On this point, Gourville found it difficult, at times, to meet the inventive fancy of Henri-Jules, who was gifted with a marked talent for landscape-gardening, and a passion for exercising it. The expenses incurred through former altera-

tions and additions, had caused no small part of the Prince's debts ; special mention is made of a grotto in the park, which Condé writes of as a temple for the Loves and Graces ; ' les Amours n'en bougent plus '.¹

In March, 1672, Condé was drawn from the contemplation of his gardens by the declaration of war made by France against the States of Holland. Of the powers who had formed the Triple Alliance, it was Holland, alone, whom Louis was resolved to crush. The nearness of the Dutch provinces to his own territory ; the reputation of their inhabitants for courage and love of liberty, and the tradition of their stubborn resistance to monarchy, as represented by Spain, all combined to make him feel the existence of the States a danger, and almost a personal insult, to himself. For the four years that followed the peace of Aix-la-Chapelle, he worked with the object of their destruction consistently in view. Counsellor by Louvois, he first took measures to isolate the States, by seeking terms with England and Sweden ; a course which the existing Government, in each country, helped to render shamefully easy. Charles II was persuaded—chiefly through the agency of Madame, his sister—to add a secret clause to the treaty of Dover, signed in May, 1670 ; thereby pledging himself, not only to forswear his former alliance, but to attack the States, as soon as France should give the signal. Sweden yielded openly to the highest bidder ; France offered a larger sum, as payment for neutrality, than the Dutch could give, for support. Spain, contrary to all tradition, inclined to the States, and, though outwardly neutral, secretly proffered help. Of the German ruling Princes, the majority were friendly to France ; only the Elector of Brandenburg was found to ally himself openly with the Dutch ; the Emperor of Austria was neutral. Louis, having reduced his enemy to this state of almost complete isolation, was scarcely at the pains to give a nominal reason for declaring war. The Dutch ambassador, summarily dismissed from the French Court, departed in bewilderment, after futile efforts to delay hostilities, or to discover their definite cause ; and when, later, an envoy arrived with vain offers of concession from the States, the King, to make clear his martial intentions, gave him audience with Turenne

¹ * B.N., July 1667.

and Condé on either side, and two younger Marshals, Créqui and Luxembourg, behind the throne.

The unconcealed dismay of the ambassador, and the protests of John de Witt, Grand Pensionary, and practically ruler, of the States, might well mislead Louis and his ministers as to the character of the resistance they were likely to meet. Rightly or wrongly, De Witt was convinced, in all sincerity and patriotism, that the good of his country demanded peace, even at the price of accepting protection from France. The strength of the Dutch provinces, as he judged, lay in their commerce; on this point, England was their chief rival; and France was the power best fitted to keep England in check. But De Witt was far from representing the universal temper of the Dutch people. The abolition, eight years earlier, of the hereditary Stattholderate, had by no means quenched the feeling of public devotion to the House of Orange; and it was the head of that House whom the people were now longing to acclaim as their champion, in a war against foreign oppression. William of Orange was scarcely more than a boy, in years, when De Witt acceded to popular demands by appointing him 'Captain-General of the Forces'; but already, Gourville, on a mission to The Hague, had observed that, where statecraft was concerned, 'he knew a great deal for his age'. It might be said that no young man of twenty-one ever had more need of such knowledge; not all his precocity could outweigh the fact that he had, at this time, neither forces, revenue, nor even physical health, equal to the task before him. The record of his thirty years' conflict against the power of France, has here no place; he figures only among the adversaries who measured themselves against Condé in the field; and, in that company, his unfailing courage and tenacity have won him an honourable place. As a strategist, his gifts fell far short of genius; but, where his life's object was concerned, no failure could bring him discouragement, no scruple trouble him, no fair offer tempt him from his purpose. His whole attitude of mind is summed up in the comparison which he—though the least imaginative of men—was once inspired to make, by the sight of a fellow-countryman's persistence. "He told me", wrote Sir William Temple, after one of many attempts to impose conditions on the

Prince of Orange, " that he had seen, that morning, a poor old man, tugging alone in a little boat, against the eddy of a sluice upon the canal ; that when, with the last endeavour, he was just got up to the place intended, the force of the eddy carried him quite back again ; but he turned his boat as soon as he could, and fell to his oars again ; and thus three or four times, while the Prince saw him. And concluded, that this old man's business and his, were too like one another ; and that he ought, however, to do just as the old man did, without knowing what would succeed, any more than in the poor man's case ".¹

The military resources of the United Provinces, could, at no time, have equalled those of France ; and whereas, at the time when war was declared, the past three years had been devoted to bringing the French army as near as possible to the existing standard of perfection, De Witt's peace policy had resulted in considerable neglect of the Dutch forces. At sea, the fleet under De Ruyter seemed likely to hold its own against either French or English enemies ; but the land forces available for service in the field mustered no more than twenty-five thousand men, as opposed to the army, one hundred and twenty thousand strong, which Louis found at his disposal when he prepared to open the campaign at the beginning of May. This great force consisted of two divisions ; the King joined Turenne and eighty thousand men—the ' army of France '—at Charleroi ; while Condé, at Sedan, took up the command of forty thousand—called the ' army of the Ardennes '. Both divisions marched on May 9th, to meet before Maestricht ; Louis and Turenne followed the left bank of the Meuse, and, having a shorter route to cover, had occupied Tongres, Bilsen, and Maaseick, before they were joined by Condé at Visé, on May 18th. Nine thousand men had been detached, in advance, by Turenne, for the investment of Maestricht ; and Condé, mindful of the town's strategical importance, advised the King to see the siege successfully concluded before continuing his advance ; but Louis, ever on his guard against the appearance of submitting to his cousin's dictation, refused to countenance the delay. His wish was supported by the deliberate opinion of Turenne, who held that no time should be allowed for

¹ Temple, *Memoirs*.

the Dutch to repair the neglect of past years. The idea of a siege was abandoned ; ten thousand men were left to mask Maestricht, while the main forces marched northwards upon the Rhine.

Condé crossed the river at Kaiserswerth ; on June 1st, he was before Wesel, and had summoned Van Santen, the Governor, to open the gates. Great alarm prevailed in the town ; for the garrison was in no state to resist a siege ; yet Van Santen hesitated to risk disgrace by immediate surrender. Condé, hearing of the panic, at once turned it to good account. On the morning after his summons, thirty ladies of high rank, among the inhabitants of Wesel, sent to ask for passports, in order to leave the town before the time of danger ; but the Prince, fully aware of the effect likely to be produced by their presence, answered " that he would on no account deprive his conquest of its fairest ornament ", and that no passports would be issued on any pretext. The result surpassed all expectations ; the ladies scaled the ramparts, where some semblance of defence was being prepared, and seized Van Santen, who agreed to yield, sooner than let himself be torn in pieces. His fate was a hard one, for on him fell all the ignominy of surrender ; the garrison were made prisoners of war ; and Condé's troops marched in on June 6th. Turenne, on the left bank of the Rhine, had meanwhile occupied the fortresses of Orsoy and Buderich. The French forces continued their march ; Condé still keeping the river's right bank. Rees fell, to the ' army of France ', on June 8th, and Emmerich to the ' army of the Ardennes ', on the following day. Thus, in the space of little more than a week, the Dutch saw their defences on the Rhine pass, with scarcely a blow, into the enemy's hands. Their hopes of resistance now depended solely on the force which the Prince of Orange had drawn up on the Yssel ; at the point where that river, making a junction with the Rhine, barred the way against the invader.

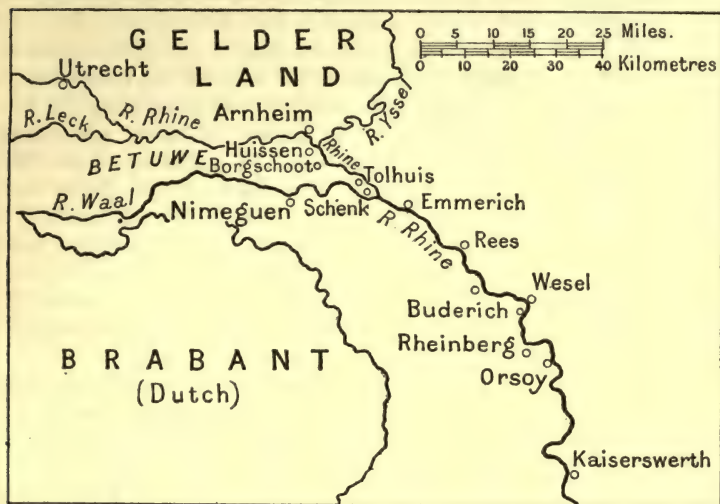
After the taking of Rees, Turenne, with the King and the ' army of France ', crossed the Rhine at Emmerich, to join Condé on the right bank. This manœuvre was necessary in order to avoid the passage of the Waal, whose wide channel branches off from that of the Rhine, carrying a great volume of water to the sea. Below the Waal, the Rhine flows in a

stream so diminished that the suggestion was entertained of recrossing by ford, to surprise the enemy. The undertaking might not be an easy one ; but to reach the left bank of the Rhine, or of the Yssel, was absolutely essential to the success of the campaign ; and since, from the position of the Dutch forces, encamped at Westervoort, it seemed clear that the Prince of Orange expected an attack on the Yssel, the French Generals decided to outwit him by crossing the Rhine.

While Turenne was advancing from Rees to Emmerich, Condé had been deputed by the King to reconnoitre the river banks, with a view to discovering a ford. The French plan of campaign was first to occupy the district—or island, as it was called—of Betuwe, which lies between the Rhine and the Waal ; then, having at their disposal the supplies of that fertile land, to advance upon Utrecht and Amsterdam. With the Prince, on his reconnaissance, there were, besides his son, two young officers in whom he felt a keen personal interest. Of these, one was the Comte de Guiche, now serving as his Lieutenant-General ; the other was the second son of Madame de Longueville ; Charles-Paris d'Orléans, who, through his father's death and his brother's withdrawal to a monastery, had lately succeeded to the family title. As Duc de Longueville he had already been singled out for a further honour ; the Poles, tired of their latest elected ruler, had once more reverted to thoughts of a French Prince, and had dispatched envoys to invite the young Duke's candidature. Condé was much attached to his nephew, who, as a soldier, showed some promise, but who was entirely reckless and almost untried. Neither he nor Enghien was capable of offering much practical assistance in the matter before them. Guiche, however, had served an apprenticeship in the Polish wars, and had forded the great rivers of Eastern Europe ; it was on him, therefore, that Condé chiefly relied, and it is his account which, written very shortly afterwards, describes the operation in greatest detail.

The King had established his headquarters at Emmerich ; Condé, carrying out his orders, advanced to St. Heerenberg, a short distance farther down the river ; where, from rising ground, he could observe the movements of the troops on the Rhine, or on the Yssel. The Prince of Orange, beginning to perceive that the

passage of the Rhine might not prove an insuperable difficulty, detached a force under Montbas, a French renegade in the Dutch service. These troops crossed the river at Arnheim, and encamped on the banks at three separate points between Arnheim and the Waal; at Huissen, at Borgschoot, and at the little village of Tolhuys, where a single fortified tower marked, as the name implies, the place where toll had once been levied on all who passed over into the province of Gelderland. Guiche, after much diligent inquiry, lighted upon an inhabitant of the country who was willing to act as guide, and to point out the spot where,



directly opposite the Tolhuys, a ford was believed to be practicable, in the summer drought. This news was brought to the Prince at nightfall, on June 10th. 'He was not in a good humour that evening,' as Guiche candidly records; but it must be allowed that he had some reason for annoyance. The officer whom he had sent to reconnoitre towards Arnheim, had not confined himself to obeying orders, but had employed his time, further, in exchanging shots, across the river, with a skirmishing party of the enemy, "making noise enough" as Condé wrathfully observed, "to alarm the Prince of Orange in his camp, and so give him time to reinforce the troops at the Tolhuys".

This incident made the message brought by Guiche doubly welcome. At daybreak on June 11th, Condé started forth, with Enghien, Guiche, and some half-dozen officers of his staff. The guide, who had been heavily bribed, either was, or pretended to be, so much overcome by the thought of betraying his country, that he had to be 'refreshed with brandy', at frequent intervals; he contrived, nevertheless, to indicate the ford, and to give all necessary information concerning it. From the right bank, the Dutch camps on the opposite side of the river were plainly visible; and, to the astonishment of the French officers, those at Huissen and Borgschoot, which had been occupied the day before, were now seen to be deserted. At the Tolhuys, however, were evident signs of preparation. The Prince of Orange had, as Condé expected, been urged by the sound of firing, into dispatching troops to the assistance, as he imagined, of those already guarding the left bank. Wirtz, the officer in command of this reinforcement, arrived only to find that Montbas, either from prudence, or, as some averred, from a treacherous inclination to serve his own country, had withdrawn his forces towards Nymeguen, leaving the river bank unguarded. The fort of Tolhuys offered some possibilities of defence, and these, Wirtz at once prepared to use to the best advantage.

One whole day—June 11th—was passed on the French side, in sounding the ford, and in bringing up materials for the construction of a floating bridge. Condé, having been summoned by the King to a council at Emmerich, left the greater part of the day's work to Guiche, who, burning to distinguish himself by some dramatic feat of arms, was resolved to make the passage at all hazards. By the evening he had brought to the King the assurance that the ford was practicable; the summer drought had left the river so low that, of its whole breadth, the horses would only need to swim twenty yards in midstream. He—Guiche—would undertake first to pass the ford, with the light cavalry, and then to form a screen for the passage of the infantry across a floating bridge. Louis gave unhesitating consent, and declared that he would superintend the operation himself. Accordingly, the morning of June 12th saw the 'army of the Ardennes' drawn up on the river bank, under the Royal command;

Condé, of necessity, occupying the second place. Four officers led the way into the stream, to mark the course of the ford; while Condé, at the water's edge, gave the signal to the waiting squadrons, who followed in due order, their horses breasting the current as they advanced in line. Guiche, with two or three of the younger officers, crossed at the head of the second squadron. Enghien would have plunged in with them, but Condé, fearing for his son as he had never feared for himself, kept him back almost by force, with a hand on his bridle. The guns from the Tolhuys fort kept up a brisk fire, causing some disorder among the squadrons in midstream; the horses were seized with panic, and many of them, swerving from the ford, were swept into the current with their riders, and drowned. Guiche writes of how he saw a young cornet of the cuirassiers swimming, as best he might, 'in his boots and cuirass', and still keeping hold of his colours, which were saved. From the right bank, a French battery of twelve guns answered those of the Tolhuys; their fire was directed, with deadly effect, upon the Dutch squadrons whom Wirtz ordered up, to attack the invading forces as they came to land. The disorder of the crossing was so promptly repaired by Guiche, as scarcely to leave the enemy an advantage; Wirtz was repulsed, after a brief skirmish, and fell back upon Arnheim, leaving the French infantry to cross unhindered.

But the success of the famous 'passage du Rhin', indisputable though it might be, was still to be marred by an act of such rashness as had brought many tragedies upon the 'flower of the youth of France'. Condé, with Enghien, Longueville, the Duc de Bouillon, and the Prince de Marcillac, crossed in a small boat, while their horses swam with the rest. They landed in time to see Guiche beat back the Dutch squadrons, and a few younger officers, eager for a share of distinction, pressed the pursuit; among them, Enghien and Longueville, who escaped, like children, from the vigilance of M. le Prince. Their headlong course brought them to the point where, on the road to Huissen, a battalion of Dutch infantry had raised barricades, in the hope of making a stand. The flight of the cavalry, however, convinced them that resistance would be useless, and their officers went forward, to ask

for quarter, as soon as the foremost French horsemen came within hearing. Longueville, mad with excitement, and determined not to be baulked of a fight, only cried aloud, 'Tue ! tue ! Pas de quartier pour cette canaille !' and discharged his pistol across the barricade. The Dutch answered by a discharge of musketry, at close range, which wrought havoc among their assailants. Longueville and three other 'volontaires', were killed on the spot ; of the rest, nine, including Marcillac, were severely wounded. Condé, hearing the shots, came up, followed only by his staff, to find his nephew dead, and his son in imminent danger. He was himself the object of a direct attack ; a Dutch officer, Ossensbroek by name, rode up to within a few paces of him and fired a pistol full at his head ; the Prince raised his left arm to shield himself, and the bullet struck his wrist, shattering the bone. A moment later, the arrival of Guiche with a squadron of cuirassiers, compelled the surrender of the Dutch battalion ; an issue which had never been in doubt, but which had been dearly bought by the House of Condé, and by more than one other great family as well.

The Prince let his wound be hurriedly bandaged, and gave the necessary orders for the disposal of the troops ; but he could scarcely turn his thoughts from the overwhelming sorrow of Longueville's death. His own grief was intensified by the knowledge of all that the loss would mean to his sister. This younger son had been her joy and pride ; he had inherited much of her own good looks and power of pleasing ; and there were many to echo Madame de Sévigné's opinion that 'all Holland was not worth such a Prince'.¹ Condé would not, at first, be parted from the dead body of his nephew ; it was placed beside him, covered with a cloak, in the same boat which, a few hours earlier, had brought them across the river ; Longueville then wild with anticipation, and threatening to throw himself into the water if his uncle should try and hinder him from sharing in the sport. Together, the living and the dead passed back to the right bank, and found shelter in a fisherman's hut, where the Prince spent the night, in grievous suffering, both of body and mind. Guiche visited him, and was overcome by the sight of his distress ; "J'eus le coeur plus serré

¹ Madame de Sévigné, *Letters*, June 17, 1672.

qu'homme au monde", he writes ; adding that " no one ever paid less heed to a broken arm " than M. le Prince. The King, and the chief officers of the army, came, each in turn, to offer condolences. In their midst, as though to emphasise the destruction of all the hopes that had centred on Longueville, there appeared, with dramatic unexpectedness, the Polish envoys ; who, reaching Paris sooner than was looked for, had been directed to the camp, and finally to the hut, where lay the dead body of their King-designate. Condé was well known, by reputation, in Poland ; and it was said that the envoys could scarcely conceal their astonishment on learning that the grief-stricken man, whom they found watching by the corpse, was that same Prince whose fierceness was renowned throughout Europe.

The wound which Condé showed himself so anxious to treat lightly, gave him cause to repent this early neglect ; the wrist bone was shattered, and the surgery of the time knew no better method of healing than to let the broken splinters work their way out by degrees. His recovery was further delayed by an attack of gout, which settled in the wound, causing abscesses and fever, and ' leaving him no rest, by day or night '. Although the injury was to his left arm, some time passed before he was able to undertake correspondence ; so much is evident from a letter addressed to him by the eleven-year-old Dauphin, who gravely assures him of the ' most particular interest ' felt in all his concerns, and congratulates him—somewhat prematurely—on his restoration to health : " I would have told you all this before ", the little Prince concludes, " only that I was waiting till you should be in a state not to be inconvenienced by a letter ".¹ Among the earliest letters which Condé himself wrote, with much effort, during his convalescence, is one to a friend of long standing, the Bishop of Autun ; whom he begs to visit Madame le Longueville, and to give her what consolation is possible in her affliction.² To his sister, he sent a few lines, telling of his intense wish to be with her : " in the hope that I might in some degree lessen your grief, which is the thing, of all others, that I long to do ".³

While Condé spent many weeks of enforced inaction,

¹ *A.C., July 8, 1672.

² *A.C., July, 1672.

³ *A.C., July, 1672.

the affairs of the Netherlands moved swiftly forwards to a crisis. The triumph of the French was, in a measure, assured, from the moment they crossed the Rhine ; for the whole length and breadth of the United Provinces, could not have furnished, at that time, an armed force capable of wrecking the designs of such an enemy. The Prince of Orange fell back from the frontier ; Arnheim surrendered to Turenne (June 14th) ; and the whole district of Betuwe was occupied by the invading force. Fortunately, however, for his adversaries, Louis, at this point, undertook the direction of the campaign in good earnest ; the plan of a rapid advance upon Utrecht and Amsterdam was abandoned, at his wish, and instead, his troops devoted their energies to reducing the chief towns in the provinces of Over-Yssel and Gelderland. Here, as was to be expected, he met with no resistance ; within ten days (June 13th-23rd) no fewer than thirty fortresses had opened their gates to him. In Paris, as well as among the courtiers who surrounded him, the tidings of his daily conquests renewed the transports of admiration which had been aroused by the ' passage of the Rhine '. Public opinion, fired by a loyal disregard of facts, was already convinced that " the whole army had swum the river, in the presence of a strongly-entrenched enemy, and notwithstanding the fire of an impregnable fortress " ;¹ and this achievement, not less than the facile triumphs that followed, was ascribed solely to the sublime courage and wisdom of the King. Three weeks passed, before Louis crowned his successful march by the taking of Utrecht ; weeks during which the whole face of civil affairs in the Provinces took on a new aspect. The Dutch people, grown desperate, turned upon the man who, as they conceived, was ready to lay them at the feet of their enemy ; the report that De Witt contemplated acceptance of the humiliating terms of peace offered by France, after the taking of Utrecht, caused a public insurrection, followed by his expulsion from office, and by the proclamation of William of Orange as Stattholder. Matters stood thus, while Louis advanced from Utrecht to Naarden, within a day's march of Amsterdam. Had he reached this point a few weeks, or even a few days, earlier, he might have pushed on to Muiden, and there secured control of the great

¹ Voltaire, *Siècle de Louis XIV.*

sluice gates, the lifting of which could, at any moment, let in the sea, and flood the surrounding country for many miles. But now, the time was past; William, as Stattholder, was free to follow his own, and the nation's, wish. Once more the Dutch people prayed, as they had done in past times of oppression, that they might fall into the hand of the Lord, and not into the hand of man; they risked the loss and danger of inundation, sooner than submit to a conqueror. The French force sent from Naarden met with unexpected resistance from the garrison at Muiden; and before reinforcements could come up, the sluices had been opened by the inhabitants of the town. Further advance was impossible; Louis, in his own words, 'was forced to limit his conquests'. Not that his campaign was,—or, indeed, could be—looked on as other than successful, from certain points of view. When, on July 10th, he set out from Naarden, on his return journey to France, he had occupied three out of the seven provinces, and had put French garrisons in over thirty towns. Luxembourg was left in command of the troops, and war was to be renewed, as soon as winter should turn the floods into ice; the complete subjugation of Holland was considered to have been merely postponed for a few months. This view was not modified by the further outbreak which took place on August 20th, in Amsterdam; by the death of De Witt at the hands of an infuriated mob, or by the increased ascendancy of the Stattholder, who was freely accused of having instigated the crime. Louis still feared resistance so little that he even sanctioned the liberation, for a trifling ransom, of twenty thousand Dutch soldiers, who had fallen into French hands as prisoners of war, and whose maintenance had become a difficulty. These men, as a modern historian has pointed out, formed the nucleus of an army which was to withstand the power of France for the next fifty years; and the warning they received with their freedom, that any one of them would be hanged, if taken again, only served to make them fight with more desperate courage.¹

Condé left Arnheim, where the greater part of his convalescence had been spent, early in August. The two following months he passed at Chantilly, with occasional visits to the Court at St. Germain, and to

¹ Hardy de Périni, *Turenne et Condé*.

Port Royal des Champs, where Madame de Longueville was finding the consolations of the religious life. His health was indifferent, and he had every reason for husbanding it ; as the autumn drew on, it became evident that his services would soon be again required. Louis, for all his overwhelming superiority of numbers, and his many conquests, had let pass an opportunity which he was not to meet with again. Europe was awakening to the necessity of preserving the balance of power among nations ; Spain and Austria joined with the Electorate of Brandenburg in declaring openly for the United Provinces. In October, an army forty-five thousand strong—Austrians, Prussians, and Lorrainers—was advancing upon the Rhine, under Count Montecuccoli, the greatest soldier of fortune the world had seen since François de Mercy fell at Nördlingen. Turenne, with sixteen thousand men, was appointed to watch the frontier, between Wesel and Mayence, and to prevent Montecuccoli from effecting a junction with the Prince of Orange. Condé, with a small force of six thousand men, was to watch the river between Mayence and Strasbourg. The occupation of three provinces, and the garrisoning of some thirty fortresses, had told so heavily upon the numbers of the French army, that these reduced forces were all that could be mustered against an enemy of more than twice their strength. By far the greater share of activity fell to Turenne, who, by a masterly series of strategic movements, held Montecuccoli in check, and finally drove him back from the Rhine, into the heart of Germany.

Condé, partly through illness and partly through the chances of war, played only a small part in this winter campaign. The force at his disposal was so insignificant as to make any offensive movement impossible, and no reinforcements were to be looked for ; Turenne, on whom, by Louis' orders, he depended, had not a man to spare. The fact was patent that the command held, for the moment, by M. le Prince, was unworthy of a soldier of his reputation ; he even ventured to represent to the King that the enemy " could have no thought of attacking " the frontier which he was to guard ; but Louis, true to his principle of repression, was careful to give his cousin, from time to time, some such unwelcome reminder of the Royal authority. Yet if employment were in itself to be

looked on as a mark of favour, the Prince had no cause to complain. For a man who might well have been leading an invalid life, it must be admitted that he did not spare himself. When, in January, 1673, the Imperial and Electoral forces retreated from the Rhine, he was desired by the King to make a complete inspection of the fortresses of Alsace, before leaving the frontier ; an order which, as is proved by his memoranda on the subject, he carried out in the utmost detail. In February he returned to Chantilly, and was there allowed a respite of barely seven weeks, before he was once more summoned to the seat of war.

CHAPTER XXV

SENEFF

1673-1676

TURENNE's campaign against Montecuccoli was rightly acclaimed as a triumph of strategy; yet the fact remained that, while the winter was past, the conquest of the United Provinces was still uncompleted. There had been no continued frost to make the floods ineffectual as a defence; Luxembourg had maintained his authority in the provinces already occupied, and had caused his name to be execrated by the inhabitants, through the barbarities practised by his soldiers in levying tribute; but, when spring came, he had no gain of territory to report.

In April, 1673, Condé was appointed to supersede Luxembourg in the command of the 'army of Holland'; his task was to bar the way against the Dutch forces, while Louis, with an army of thirty-two thousand men, marched upon Maestricht, to resume the siege operations which had been abandoned a year earlier. The siege was conducted under the direction of Vauban, who made it memorable in the history of engineering by successfully imitating the system of parallels which he had seen employed by the Turks before Candia, and which was now used for the first time in Western Europe. On July 1st, the capitulation of Maestricht was signed, and the King, soon afterwards, returned to Paris, to be newly hailed as a conqueror. But a more decisive victory would have been needed to check the power of the coalition now forming against France. The German states wavered, but, by degrees, the majority were drawn in under the ægis of Austria; differences of race and religion were merged in the effort to withstand a common enemy. On the eastern frontier, Turenne, once more engaged in a strategic duel with

Montecuccoli, was twice out-manœuvred by his great adversary ; and the conclusion of the year left the advantage decidedly with the United Provinces and their allies. The schemes devised by Louvois, and approved by the King, had necessitated such dissemination of troops, in the Netherlands, in Alsace, and on the Rhine, as effectually prevented any French commander from taking the offensive. Condé, at first in Holland, and later in the Spanish Netherlands, found himself crippled at every turn by want of men ; till, to use his own words, he " finished the campaign as he had begun it, by doing nothing ".¹ On September 19th he wrote hopefully from Lille, that his troops were assembling, and that he might soon ' *entrer en danse* ' ; but, three weeks later, from the camp of Eenam, he complains that there is no chance of any immediate enterprise : " we have even less occupation here than at Lille, for there we could divide our time between balls, comedies, and ladies' visits ; here we can neither amuse ourselves, nor make war ; so that no life could be more idle and useless than ours ".² Meanwhile, the Prince of Orange, reinforced by a Spanish contingent, had obtained a definite advantage in the retaking of Naarden (September 11th) ; De Ruyter had repulsed the English fleet from the Dutch coast, and the way through Gelderland lay open for the junction of the Dutch troops with their Imperialist allies. Louis and his war minister contributed in no small degree to the enemy's success, not only by their initial plan of campaign, but also by the dispatch of countless harassing and conflicting orders on minor points, both to Condé and to Turenne ; either of whom might have been trusted to direct the operations of the troops under his command. " Give me leave to tell you ", Turenne wrote, plainly but unavailingly, to Louvois, " that detailed instructions sent from such a distance would not serve the King's interests, even if he were dealing with the most incapable man in France ". Assisted by these favouring circumstances, the Dutch effected a junction with the Imperialists at Andernach on November 3rd, and, nine days later, Bonn surrendered to their joint forces.

Before that date, however, Louvois unwillingly convinced himself and the King that the chief seat of

¹ * *A.E.*, Condé to the Duc de Vitry, September 19.

² * *Ib.*, October 6.

war had shifted from the Netherlands to the German frontier, and that an effective resistance in that quarter could only be maintained by sacrificing their hold upon the Dutch provinces. On October 22nd, an order was sent from Paris for the withdrawal of French troops from Dutch territory ; of the fortified towns taken in the campaign of 1672, nine only—including Maestricht and the Rhine towns—were still to be occupied. Condé was spared the humiliation of taking any active part in this retreat ; towards the end of October his health failed, and, at the King's wish, he relinquished his command to Bellefonds. The task of withdrawing the troops from the garrisons of Utrecht and Gelderland fell chiefly to Luxembourg, who skilfully conducted a march across the frontier to Charleroi, before the enemy could cut him off ; thus securing the first of his many strategical successes against the Prince of Orange, and somewhat relieving the disappointments of the campaign.

By the spring of 1674, Sweden alone, of all her former allies, still held to France. England was neutral ; the wish of the people, enforced by Parliament, had so far prevailed over that of the King, that a peace with the United Provinces was signed in February. The last of the German states, the ecclesiastical Electorates of Treves, Mayence, and Cologne, joined the coalition after the taking of Bonn ; Denmark had already adhered, in the autumn of the preceding year. The allies had mustered two powerful armies ; one threatening France with invasion from the east, in Alsace ; the other, from the north, in Hainault. In view of these pressing dangers the Rhine towns had perforce to be abandoned ; but Louis seized an opportunity to compensate himself for their loss by a second rapid conquest of Franche-Comté. Turenne kept the Imperialists in check, and inflicted a defeat at Sinzheim (June 16th) on Caprara, Montecuccoli's successor in the command ; while the King, meeting with little resistance in a six weeks' campaign, once more subdued the coveted province, which was, thenceforward, to be a permanent possession of France.

Condé had, with some difficulty, been restored to such health as enabled him to resume his command of the troops on the northern frontier. Early in May he marched, with a force of twenty-four thousand men, from Tournai towards the Meuse ; where Bellefonds,

with the troops drawn from the Rhine garrisons, was threatened by the enemy. Some weeks of uncertainty followed. From Louvois came word that Louis intended journeying to Flanders, and commanding the army in person, as soon as he should have subdued Franche-Comté ; he would join M. le Prince, who was to serve under him, and they would immediately proceed to one of those sieges, which, conducted on strictly orthodox principles, were the King's favourite form of warfare. But, at this suggestion, Condé's professional instinct rose in revolt ; the situation had become too serious for him to maintain the agreeable fiction that Royalty and victory must walk ever hand in hand. However sincerely anxious the King might be for his country's good, the disadvantage of his presence, in any critical operation, was nothing short of incalculable ; and the Prince, summoning all his diplomacy, represented so forcibly the difficulty of undertaking any siege, in the existing state of affairs, and the danger that His Majesty would encounter on the frontier, that Louis decided to rest on his laurels. Turenne's victory at Sinzheim had temporarily averted the danger of invasion from Alsace ; but, to the north, between Brussels and Louvain, the allies were concentrating a powerful force, whose advance it was Condé's task to oppose. June and July passed in a series of manœuvres, while Louvois' orders, and counter-orders, followed each other in bewildering succession. Condé did not escape blame for his inaction ; but he was too far outnumbered to provoke a pitched battle, unless other conditions should be exceptionally favourable. The design in which he persisted, and which he at length achieved, was that of taking up a strong position commanding the main road between Nivelles and Charleroi, at a point from which he could attack in flank any enemy attempting to cross the frontier into Champagne.

In the last days of July, the allied forces in the Netherlands were joined by an Imperial contingent, whose presence increased their total strength to over sixty thousand men. Condé, though reinforced about the same time by troops from Franche-Comté, could not muster more than forty-five thousand, all told. His Lieutenant-Generals, named, roughly, in order of merit, were Luxembourg, Fourilles, Navailles, Rochefort, and Enghien. Montal, than whom M. le Prince had no

more devoted follower, left his post of Governor of Charleroi to serve as a 'maréchal de camp'. Of the allied commanders to whom Condé was opposed, two had seen long years of service; the Comte de Souches, a Huguenot refugee in the Austrian service, 'feldzeugmeister' of the Imperialist contingent; and the Marquis d'Assentar, who commanded the Spanish forces. Above them both, holding the chief command, by reason of his rank as Prince and Stattholder, was William of Orange, a General scarcely older, or more tried, than Condé himself had been at Rocroy; eager for the impending battle which was to be his first, as it was Condé's last; tense with the desire to measure himself against one of the foremost soldiers of the age; yet so far conscious of his own inexperience that, as he said, "he would give half his possessions to have served under the Prince, before serving against him".¹

Condé had taken up his position on a stretch of high ground, some ten miles to the north-west of his base of supplies at Charleroi. Three villages were occupied by his troops; Trazégnies, where he fixed his headquarters; Piéton, the key of the position, where the main strength of his army was concentrated; and Fontaine-l'Evêque, where a considerable force of infantry was posted, as a guard against any attempt to turn the position from the south. The camp at Piéton was pitched on the brow of a hill, at the foot of which the river of the same name, a small tributary of the Meuse, runs through a tract of wooded and marshy ground; the artillery—sixty pieces in all—was so distributed as to command each way of approach. Two courses were open to the allied Generals; either they might attack the French camp—a course which, if successful, would dispose, at one blow, of all resistance in the Netherlands; or, by a rapid advance, they might reach the frontier before Condé could descend from his coign of vantage at Piéton to bar their way. The strength of the French position seemed to counsel the latter course. On August 8th, the allies were at Nivelles; two days later, they encamped between Arquennes and Seneff, and there arrived at a final decision; the Prince of Orange yielded to the more mature judgment of Souches, and the idea of an attack on the camp was definitely abandoned. At midnight, on August 10th, the troops were

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

once more on the march ; their leaders hoping that daylight, when it came, might show the French army left in their rear, and the way clear before them to the frontier. Their order of march was as follows. Two thousand horse, chosen from all three nations, formed an advance guard ; next came the main forces of the Imperialists ; then, the Dutch ; and lastly, the Spaniards. The rear-guard, close on six thousand cavalry of mixed nationalities, and three Dutch infantry battalions, was commanded by the Prince de Vaudemont, son of Duke Charles of Lorraine. Each division marched in three columns ; the infantry in the centre, keeping the high road, or 'Chemin Royal' ; the cavalry on the left ; the baggage, under escort, on the right, forcing a difficult way through the woods of Buisseret.

Condé was kept well informed of the enemy's movements. St. Clas, the officer in charge of the scouting operations, reported the allies' march from Nivelles, and their delay near Seneff. Their hesitation was evident, whether to attack Piéton, or to march for the frontier. Condé was prepared either to fight a defensive action in his present position, or to attack the enemy's rear-guard in flank as they passed Seneff ; his inferiority in numbers obliged him to avoid the risk of engaging the whole allied force at the same time. He had already established outposts across the Piéton, at Vandebeke ; and, on the evening of August 10th, a detached force was posted outside the camp, at the ford below the village of Gouy. St. Clas, who passed that night among the woods near Seneff, was aware of a stir in the enemy's camp, and, soon after midnight, of the noise of troops on the march. Two hours before daylight, Condé, at Trazégnies, was roused by the news that the allies were on the high road for the frontier. His friends might well say the prospect of active service 'did him more good than all Bourdelot's remedies for gout' ; he had spent the whole of the preceding day on horseback, and now, at a moment's notice, was in the saddle again ; although riding-boots were, at that time, such torture to him that he was forced to discard them altogether, and to go into action in silk stockings and slippers. But, if his energy was unimpaired, his temper suffered inevitably. Gourville, who had studied all his moods, noted his impatience early in the day, as he gave orders to his staff ; even Luxembourg came,

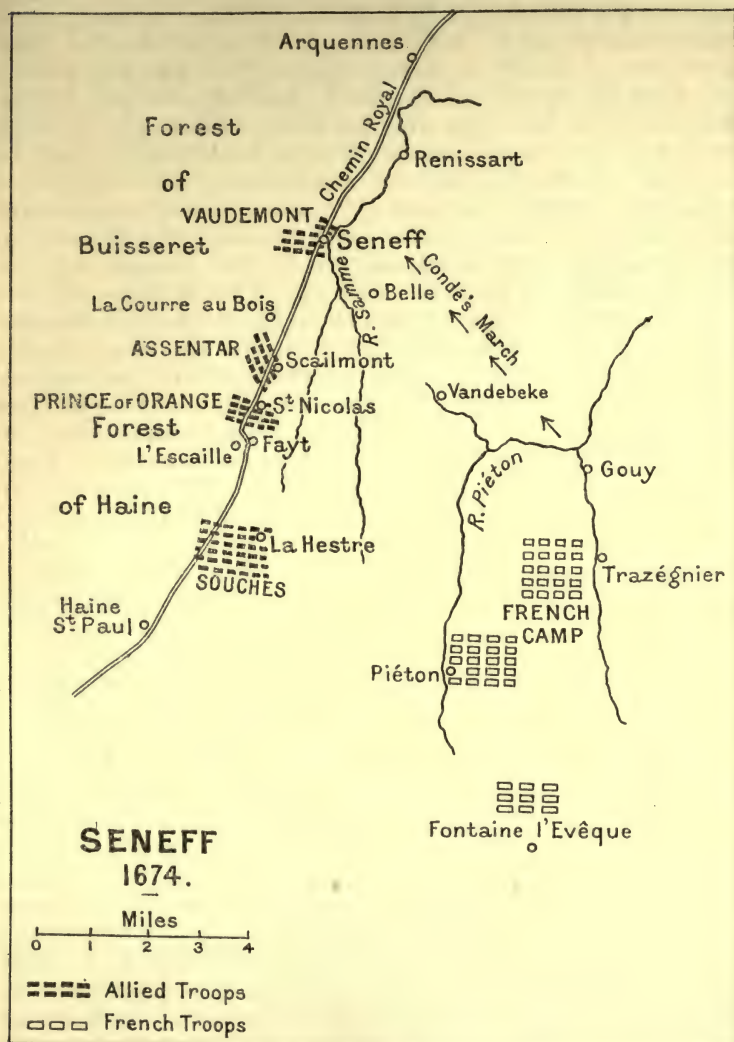
with the rest, under the lash of his displeasure for offering to ride on, in his stead, and observe some point in the enemy's disposition of troops. All the staff eagerly proffered their services, till the Prince angrily told them 'to let him take his own way'; at this 'each one stopped short', as well he might, and Condé went forward alone, some two or three hundred yards. Having satisfied himself as to the point in question, he returned in a more serene frame of mind; "reflecting, no doubt", says Gourville, "that he had given way to anger, without much cause. The rest of his orders he gave very kindly".¹ It would seem to have been during these early hours—though the exact moment is uncertain—that a young 'volontaire', Hector de Villars, first attracted Condé's notice, and gave proof of the gifts which were, one day, to make him a Marshal of France and the victor of Denain. Villars feared the sound of his own voice as little as he feared the enemy; and when some preliminary movement of Vaudemont's cavalry was mistaken, by certain experienced soldiers, for a retreat, he spoke out, boldly and unasked: "They are not retreating; they are changing their order of march". "Who told you that, young man?" asked Condé; Villars, with complete self-possession, gave reasons for his assertion, which proved to be perfectly correct; Vaudemont, warned of the approaching attack, was taking up a position at Seneff to resist it. Possibly the Prince's good opinion was not lessened when, some hours later, he drew his sword to lead his squadrons to the charge, and heard Villars exclaim fervently: "Now I have seen what I most longed to see!—the Great Condé, sword in hand!"²

Soon after four o'clock on the morning of August 11th, the Prince reached the height of Belle, beyond Vandebeker, and there issued his orders for the first of the four engagements known, collectively, as the battle of Seneff. The troops told off for the attack were those from Vandebeker and Gouy. To Montal was given the coveted distinction of leading the infantry to the assault on Seneff. Directions had been sent to the troops in camp at Piéton, Trazégnies, and Fontaine-l'Évêque, to advance to Gouy, cross the river, and await further orders. Fourilles, with eight hundred horse, was to cross the Samme at Renissart, and fall upon the

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

² Villars, *Mémoires*.

Spanish baggage and escort, which had not yet reached Seneff, from the camp near Arquennes. St. Clas,



with a detachment of cavalry, was dispatched towards La Hestre and Haine St. Paul, to create a diversion by engaging a skirmish with the enemy's advance guard.

From the point marked by the windmill of Belle, Condé surveyed the tract of uneven and thickly-wooded country stretching southwards from Seneff to Fayt ; a distance of four or five miles. Fayt, standing on a plateau, rose as a landmark above orchards and hop-gardens ; scarcely a mile to the north, was the priory of St. Nicolas-des-Bois, half-hidden among trees. Seneff, lying between the parallel courses of the high road and the river Samme, was to be the first point of attack. Here, Vaudemont had made rapid preparations for defence ; his infantry was concentrated in and around the parish church ; his cavalry was drawn up in three lines, at right angles to the village, on the left bank of the Samme. On the French side, all was in readiness at daylight, but the attack was still delayed for a few hours ; Condé gave time for the allies to put some miles of difficult country between their main army and their rear-guard. It was not till ten o'clock that Montal, stationed under cover of rising ground, near the bridge of Seneff, received the signal to advance. Time had failed Vaudemont for carrying out his intention of destroying the bridges across the Samme ; Montal passed over, and led up his battalions to the attack ; their advance protected by six pieces of light artillery, posted on the river's right bank. At the same time, Condé, with two thousand of the King's household cavalry, crossed by a second bridge, below Seneff, in order to engage the enemy's squadrons on the left bank. The fight in the village was brief, but fierce ; the Dutch battalion who held the church, perished to a man, rather than surrender. In little more than an hour the French had occupied Seneff ; they, too, had suffered, and Montal was among the wounded ; but the fortune of the day was, so far, in their hands. Condé's attack on Vaudemont's cavalry had been no less successful ; the French were inferior in numbers, but the ' Gardes du Corps ' were a picked force, and their leaders were, to say the least, worthy of them. Rochefort and Condé charged in succession ; the first and second lines of the enemy were thrown into hopeless disorder ; and, as the third line advanced, Fourilles, having completed a turning movement, and scattered the baggage escort, appeared unexpectedly on their left flank. The allied squadrons, hardly waiting to be attacked, fled in confusion, to take refuge with the Spanish main army,

leaving the French masters of the field. Rochefort was wounded ; Condé's first horse had been killed under him. So ended the fight of Seneff proper ; but the ' battle of Seneff ', those long hours of deadly combat, had, as yet, scarcely begun. The enemy's rear-guard was disposed of ; the main Imperial, Dutch, and Spanish forces were still unscathed ; and no tiger that has tasted blood was ever more fiercely bent, than was Condé, on continuing the work of destruction.

Before midday, each of the three allied commanders had received word of the rear-guard's defeat. Souches, resting his troops at La Hestre, had, till that time, been occupied, as Condé intended, in observing the movements of St. Clas. An urgent summons forced him to retrace his march ; but, in his heart, the veteran mistrusted the judgment of his young Commander-in-Chief, and, though he obeyed the order, he did so unwillingly, and with no great haste. The Prince of Orange dispatched reinforcements to Assentar, who was likely to be next attacked ; and himself took up a position in the orchards surrounding the Priory of St. Nicolas. Assentar, warned by fugitives from Seneff, drew up his forces in the space of comparatively level ground stretching from the castle of Scailmont towards the farm of La Courre-au-Bois ; his infantry held the castle, with the cavalry drawn up to the rear. Condé, after the dispersal of Vaudemont's cavalry, made no attempt at pursuit, but advanced slowly in the track of the enemy, making way with difficulty, through a country of woods and thickets and deep narrow lanes. It was not till he came within less than a mile of Scailmont that Assentar's position was revealed to him. The gardens and orchards, enclosed by high hedges, which stretched between the French troops and the enemy, made a frontal attack by cavalry impossible ; but the foremost infantry battalions from Piéton, urged by repeated summons, were now at hand ; and each battalion, as it arrived, was deploying for action. The cavalry, led, on the right, by Luxembourg, and on the left, by Condé and Fourilles, was to surround the enemy's position, taking advantage of the more open ground to east and west. This second engagement was sterner, though not longer, than the first. The Spaniards, after a vigorous resistance, were forced to abandon their ground, and to fall back upon St. Nicolas.

Assentar, mortally wounded, was taken prisoner, and died a few days later.

St. Nicolas, where William of Orange awaited Condé's attack, lay within a mile to the west of Scailmont, among the thickest of the orchards and hop-gardens; the 'vineyards of Fribourg' had scarcely offered greater obstacles than did this fertile country of Hainault. The Priory was built on a steep hillside; on the slope above, was concentrated the main strength of the Dutch force. The French troops had begun to show signs of exhaustion, but not an instant's rest could be granted them; at any moment Souches might appear. Condé at once framed his plan of attack on the same lines as at Scailmont; the infantry to advance in the centre; Luxembourg on the right; Fourilles on the left. For Luxembourg, the task was comparatively easy; he found before him, in the woods to the right, only the baggage column of the Dutch army. With Fourilles, the case was far different. He saw before him a steep, wooded hillside, where the enemy's infantry was strongly posted; he saw, too, his own squadrons of the 'Gendarmes', and the 'Gardes du Corps', both horses and men bearing marks of the arduous service they had done in the last few hours; and, strong in an established reputation for courage, he disputed the order to attack. Would M. le Prince—he asked—consent to a delay? Fresh squadrons were coming up from Piéton, and would be better fitted for the work. Condé was in no mood to tolerate such representations; he knew nothing but that time was being lost, and his orders questioned. For the second time that day, he gave way to unjust anger; he turned upon Fourilles with the ungoverned rage of a hot-tempered man suffering from physical overstrain: "You like talking better than fighting", he said, "but I have no time to listen to you. I ordered you to charge; you have only to obey!" Fourilles hesitated no longer; without a word of self-defence, he led his squadrons to the attack. The 'Gardes du Corps' charged up the slope, and, by dint of terrific effort cut a way through the Dutch battalions; Condé followed, at the head of the 'Gendarmes', driving back the enemy over the crest of the hill, and down the farther side. The Dutch infantry in the centre also gave way, though not till after repeated attacks. Condé's confidence in the

troops was justified, but at the cost of heavy losses, and of a dark stain of injustice on his own memory. Fourilles had vindicated his reputation with his life; he was mortally wounded in the charge, and survived only a few days. It was said that, as he was carried from the field, he told those near him that he hoped he might still live some hours, only to see how Condé—to whom he applied the most abusive epithet he could command—"would come out of the scrape he had got himself into". Yet his later words were not those of resentment. Gourville, who visited him on his death-bed, heard from him that he was glad to have served, if only once, under M. le Prince; "of whose courage he spoke in exaggerated language, and with oaths".¹

Fourilles was not mistaken when he spoke of Condé's predicament as a 'scrape' (pétrin) from which he would find it hard to extricate himself. The caution with which the Prince had planned his attack upon the enemy's rear-guard had vanished, beyond recall, in the heat of action; his successes at Seneff, Scailmont, and St. Nicolas, had drawn him on, till he felt as though victory were actually within his grasp. But William of Orange, beaten back from St. Nicolas, was far from acknowledging defeat; within an hour he had rallied his forces, and had taken up a new, and stronger, position, on the hill of Fayt. Souches, after some delay, was close at hand; and even Condé could scarcely count on triumphing, for a fourth time, over an enemy whose resources were so far greater than his own. Critics are divided as to whether the prudent course would have been for Condé to draw off his troops after the first engagement (Seneff), or after the third (St. Nicolas); but almost all are agreed in condemning a fourth attack, begun after several hours of practically continuous fighting, as an act of indefensible rashness. Once only, in the record of Condé's early years, is a like accusation brought against him; when, on the second day of Fribourg, he flung his troops, in vain, against the defences of the Josephsberg. At Fribourg, he had, if it were needed, the often-urged excuse of youth; but at Seneff he fought as though made reckless by the approach of age, and by some consciousness that he would never again see a pitched battle; bent desperately upon closing his career with victory, at

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

whatever cost. Three times that day, it had seemed as though no troops could withstand his charge ; each attack had been fraught with greater difficulties than the last, and at each he had triumphed. Now, before Fayt, he hesitated as little as before the enemy's earlier positions. Luxembourg still led the right ; on the left, Fourilles was replaced by Navailles ; in the centre, Condé himself prepared to direct the infantry attack. Further reinforcements, arriving from various points between Piéton and Gouy, were at once employed. These troops had been forced to alter their route as the scene of action shifted ; many of them had made a long detour by Seneff, and came up after several hours' hurried march across a difficult country, in the heat of the day ; but there was as little time to spare at Fayt, as at St. Nicolas. Luxembourg commanded sixteen cavalry squadrons, and two battalions of the regiment of ' Picardy ' ; Navailles led eighteen squadrons. The centre consisted of between thirty and forty infantry battalions, drawn up in four columns ; three for the attack, and one in reserve. A few pieces of light artillery were posted, as well as uneven ground and thick-growing trees allowed, opposite the enemy's line ; the heavy artillery was still on the road from Piéton.

The position held by the Prince of Orange at Fayt had many features in common with that of St. Nicolas ; here, again, was a hillside where quick-set hedges, and high orchard walls, formed countless effective barricades. But at Fayt, the natural obstacles were greater, and, even without the presence of the Imperialists, would have made the assault a yet more formidable enterprise. North and west, the height was surrounded by forests ; to the east lay a wide belt of hop-gardens, interspersed with streams and marshy ground. On the farther, or southern, side, a deep ravine ran north-west and south-east, ending in a marsh ; and beyond the ravine rose a further slope, almost bare of trees. Fayt itself—a small town, or ' bourg ', scarcely more than a village—offered a church, and a few solid stone-built houses, to be used for purposes of defence.

Condé had lost no time in issuing his orders for the attack ; but before his preparations were completed, the strength of the enemy confronting him had

been increased to fifty thousand men. The Imperialists reached Fayt by three o'clock in the afternoon ; six thousand men reinforced the Dutch infantry in the buildings of Fayt, and in the surrounding gardens and orchards ; while Souches drew up the main body of his troops on the open side of the farther slope, their line extending right and left beyond the hill of Fayt, and facing the French across the ravine and marsh. Twelve hours had passed since Condé left Trazégnies, and five since he first engaged the enemy ; but the burden and heat of the day were still before him.

Between three and four o'clock, the French battalions, at a given signal, attacked the village simultaneously on three sides, north, east, and west. After a desperate struggle they occupied the outlying houses, and held them till the end of the day ; but they went no farther ; successive battalions stormed the slope, only to be checked by the musketry and artillery fire which poured down upon them from the plateau on which the church stood. Hundreds lay dead on the hillside ; the rest took shelter in the orchards, within close range of the enemy, and returned their fire ; hours passed, and, despite fearful slaughter, neither side yielded an inch. On the French right, the fight was no less severe ; well sustained by Luxembourg, the ' little hunchback ', who, in later years was to make it his boast that, often as they had met in battle, the Prince of Orange " had never seen his crooked back ". The first onslaught of Luxembourg's squadrons was irresistible ; the Imperialists were driven back from the edge of the ravine, their guns were taken, and the Château de l'Escaille, which marked the extreme left of their line, was seized and occupied. Luxembourg would have pressed on, and completed a turning movement, when word came to him that he was himself in danger of being attacked in flank ; a detachment of Imperialist cavalry had been sighted on his right in the woods of Haine. Forced to divide his troops, he left the squadrons of the ' Gardes du Corps ' to hold the ravine ; then, turning to the right, he charged and routed the Imperialist force advancing through the woods. But, in his absence, the ' Gardes du Corps ', exhausted by the hard service they had done that day, gave way before the enemy's repeated counter attacks. The Prince of Orange had dispatched six thousand cavalry with orders to retake the ravine.

Their leader was a soldier well versed in Condé's methods of warfare,—Gaspard de Chavagnac, who, twenty years earlier, had literally obeyed a command¹ from M. le Prince to 'go and sulk elsewhere', and who was now in the pay of Austria. Chavagnac's charge drove back the French across the ravine, and retook the guns, but this much was scarcely achieved, when he in his turn was checked. Condé, perceiving that no frontal attack would avail unless his cavalry succeeded in turning the position, had left the infantry of the centre still holding their ground, and came up, with two battalions of the Swiss Guards, drawn from the reserve, to reinforce the right. Luxembourg returned to his post in time to see the Prince charge at the head of the 'Cuirassiers du Roi', and regain for a brief space the ground that had been lost. The fight swayed backwards and forwards across the ravine; a counter-charge of the Imperialists drove the French back once more. Condé's horse, the second he lost that day, was shot in the mêlée; and since he was too lame to help himself, he ran great danger of being either taken prisoner or trampled to death, till, with his son's help, he was remounted, and renewed the attack. Successive cavalry charges failed to give either side a decided advantage; at length the infantry was brought forward, and 'Picardy', with the Swiss Guards, faced the Dutch Guards of the Prince of Orange. Condé ordered the Swiss into the ravine, but the fire from the artillery on the farther slope, as well as from the Dutch muskets, was overwhelming; the troops would not advance. La Fare, a French cavalry officer, tells how he saw them "stand motionless, with their shoulders bowed, like men in fear"; and how M. le Prince, desperate, but outwardly calm, said only, as he watched them: "Il faut chercher d'autres; ceux-la n'iront pas".² Even while he spoke, Condé realised that, where the Swiss Guard was known to have flinched from duty, other troops were not likely to succeed. They could stand their ground and avert defeat, but no complete victory was to be his that day. Throughout the hours that followed, Escaille was held by the French, and the ravine by the allies; "never", says an English contemporary writer, "did Fortune weigh the issue of a battle more nicely". The French had no heavy artillery to oppose to that of the enemy; nevertheless, they

¹ See Chapter XVIII.

² *Mémoires du Marquis de la Fare.*

stood fast, on the edge of the ravine, till past nightfall, under a hot fire. Chavagnac records, not without pride in his countrymen, that the only sound to be heard in their ranks, was that of the officers' voices repeating after each murderous discharge : " Ce n'est rien, enfants, serrez ! " Bussy-Rabutin reflected current opinion when he wrote, not long afterwards : " What people complain of as ' leading men to be butchered ' is posting them as the Household troops were posted (at Fayt) ; whoever passed through that experience, knows the greatest trial of courage in war ".¹

Navailles, on the left, had engaged the enemy at the same time as Luxembourg, with results as deadly, but no more decisive ; and thus, hour after hour, this equal combat was waged, " with all imaginable fury and horror ", along a line of battle nearly a mile in length. Condé, visiting each point of attack in turn, found everywhere the same stubborn resistance. Night fell, but the August moon gave light enough for the struggle still to be carried on, though less fiercely than by day. It was not till close on midnight that darkness spread a merciful veil between the two armies, the firing gradually ceased, and the men, from sheer exhaustion, fell asleep where they stood. " M. le Prince ", says La Fare, " whose courage never flagged, gave orders for fresh battalions, and the heavy artillery (which had just come up) to advance, that we might renew the attack at dawn. All those who heard him, shuddered at the suggestion, and it was clear that he was the only man who still wished to fight ". But there was no dissentient voice ; none were ready to follow Fourilles' example. Condé issued his orders, and then lay down to sleep under a thorn bush, which was to be known long after as " l'Épine du Prince ". His last battle had drawn to a close, leaving him still unsatisfied. Within an hour after the action had been suspended, and while both armies, wearied out, were wrapped in silence, a few shots, fired by a sentry in the French lines, caused a sudden alarm on either side. The allies, instantly deciding to withdraw, rather than await another attack, fired a volley to cover their retreat ; and at the sound the French troops, bewildered and unnerved, gave way to panic-struck confusion. Return volleys were fired into the darkness ; horses broke loose and stampeded ; it was with difficulty

¹ Bussy-Rabutin to Madame de Sévigné.

that a mount could be secured for M. le Prince. When, after a brief space, order had been restored, Condé resigned himself to the fact that his troops were in no state to endure another day's hard fighting. Word was given to withdraw to the camp at Piéton; and before dawn, the two armies fell back, each before a retreating enemy. The allies took the road to Mons; the French returned by St. Nicolas, and through the woods to Piéton, where the first troops arrived about eight o'clock on the morning of August 12th. Gourville, who, early in the day, had prudently sought refuge in that place of comparative safety, rode out to meet the Prince as he came into camp. Condé was following the march from Fayt in a 'calèche', or open carriage; infirm as he was, he had been seventeen hours on horseback, and some twelve of those hours in action. He was now almost speechless from exhaustion; but the single utterance for which he found voice, is eloquent of his state of mind: "*If the Swiss would have advanced*", he said to Gourville, "*we should have defeated the enemy entirely*".¹

The question as to how far either side was justified in claiming Seneff as a victory, has given rise to discussion, even at the present day. Neither army could, under the circumstances, be expected to admit defeat; and since the official mind, whether in Paris, Madrid, Vienna, or Amsterdam, could only accept victory or defeat as the alternative results of a general action, it followed that France, and her allied enemies, gave thanks simultaneously for success in the same battle. The only just and reasonable view was that of 'honours divided'; and that view, in spite of the allies' retreat and losses, and of Condé's own admission that his success was incomplete, was ignored by the supreme authorities on both sides. The allies founded their claim on Condé's failure to force the position at Fayt; the French, on their unqualified triumphs in the earlier part of the day, and on the pillage and trophies which they could display after the action. But, when all was said, the outstanding feature of Seneff was, and will always be, the heavy loss inflicted on both armies. The lowest, and probably the most correct, estimate fixes the number of killed and wounded on the French side at seven thousand; and that of the allies at close on eight thousand; figures which left no need for

¹ Gourville, *Mémoires*.

exaggeration, although certain prevailing reports placed them far higher. Even at the moment when 'victory' was being outwardly acclaimed with the customary rejoicings, letters not written for publication show that the sense of misfortune was uppermost in the public mind. "We have lost six battalions, of which not a man remains"; so Launay, secretary to the Prince of Orange, writes in private correspondence: "our ruin seems so near, that I cannot tell what course we shall decide upon. My master's baggage, and that of his whole army, has been taken and pillaged. We are marching on Mons in want of everything (*manquant de tout*)"—a candid lament which has done good service to French historians, and which would have cost the writer dear, had it come to his 'master's' knowledge. On the other side, Madame de Sévigné, whose son had 'miraculously escaped' with a slight wound in the action, writes to Bussy-Rabutin: "We have lost so many through this victory, that, but for the *Te Deum*, and the colours that were carried to Notre-Dame, we should have thought it a defeat". Among the fallen, the proportion of French officers was larger even than usual. Those of the higher grades had suffered conspicuously; Fourilles was dead; Rochefort and Montal were disabled; Enghien, who had fought throughout the day at his father's side, was slightly wounded. Of the four regiments of Household cavalry—'Gardes du Corps', 'Cheveau-légers de la Garde', 'Gendarmes', and 'Cuirassiers du Roi',—each had lost their commanding officer, as well as others of lower rank. On either side, the Commander-in-Chief had set an example of reckless personal courage. Condé's share in the action has been already told; but tribute is due to the Prince of Orange, who was for eight hours in the hottest of the fight, and whose determined rally, after the engagement at St. Nicolas, had first stayed the tide of defeat. Not the least part of his reward was the well-known compliment, ungrudgingly paid by Condé, "that the Prince of Orange had acted, in all respects, like an old General, except in having exposed himself with the rashness of a young man". On this latter point, however, it was universally declared that Condé had forfeited all right to assume a judicial attitude; for, at fifty-three, he had shown himself no more circumspect than an adversary thirty years his junior.

If the day of Seneff was indecisive, the total result of the campaign was undoubtedly favourable to France. William of Orange might be second to none in courage and persistence, but in strategy he was no match for a General of Condé's capacity ; and, with an army crippled by losses, he was soon forced to abandon all idea of invading the enemy's country. A month passed, while both armies sought to recover their strength ; the allies at Quiévrain, the French, first at Piéton, and later at La Buissière. Except for an occasional skirmish, no active hostilities were attempted until September 14th, when the allies laid siege to Oudenarde. Their attack had been foreseen ; already, the garrison had received reinforcements, and Vauban had come, in haste, to direct the defence ; but his services were scarcely needed. On the day that Oudenarde was invested, Condé marched from La Buissière, and, six days later, his guns were posted on the left bank of the Scheldt, overlooking the enemy's lines before Oudenarde. Within twelve hours, the siege was raised ; the allies, refusing Condé's challenge to a general action, fell back upon Ghent, their retreat covered by a thick fog. The inevitable disputes had broken out between their commanders ; the Prince of Orange, whose zeal and energy could not but make him an exacting leader, had vehemently denounced Souches for his delay in bringing up his troops at Fayt, and the want of mutual confidence that ensued had fatally weakened their powers of resistance to an enemy. Early in October, while Condé was held fast, by an attack of gout, at Tournai, the allied forces separated ; the Imperialists marched towards the Meuse, and the Spaniards retired into their fortresses of the Netherlands. The Dutch, led by their indefatigable Prince, concluded their operations by reducing Grave ; the only advantage gained by the allies, to compensate for the loss of those high hopes, with which they had opened the campaign.

Condé reached Chantilly in the last days of October, and, on November 2nd, was received at St. Germain with marked favour by the King. Louis had never been so anxious to present his cousin in the light of a conqueror, as now, when his triumph was justly called in question. No pains were spared to impress on the public mind the success of the late campaign in repelling

invasion, and thus to obliterate the fact that, two years earlier, the complete subjugation of Holland had been looked on as assured. A greeting for the victorious commander was prepared with great ceremony; the King, sublimely gracious, awaited him, in the presence of all the Court, at the head of the great staircase. Condé, bent and infirm, but self-possessed as ever, slowly mounted the steps; half-way he paused and apologised for the delay caused by his lameness: "Mon cousin", answered Louis, in his most characteristic vein of compliment, "when a man is laden with laurels, he cannot walk fast". Certainly, in thirty-five years of a soldier's life, Condé had won enough laurels to weigh him down; but not even the King's word could convince him that the heaviest were those he had reaped at Seneff.

While Condé repulsed invasion from the northern frontier, Turenne, in Alsace, was engaged on the last and greatest campaign that he was ever to bring to a close. In August, the allies, reinforced after the losses of Sinzheim, had advanced across the Rhine, spreading alarm as far as Paris. Turenne, summoned to retire from Alsace and defend the capital, shook himself free, by a polite but firm refusal, from Louvois' interference, and obtained leave from the King to carry out his own designs. For five months he held the frontier against a greatly superior force, and on three successive occasions he defeated the enemy in the field; at Entzheim, at Mulhouse, and lastly, in the decisive action of Turckheim (January 5th, 1675). When, having driven the last of the Imperial forces from Alsace, he set out on his return journey through Champagne, the inhabitants, 'of all ages and conditions' flocked to gaze on him, and to bless him, with tears, for saving their province from the horrors of foreign occupation. Their respite from danger was brief; four months later, an Imperial army, twenty-five thousand strong, was once more threatening Strasbourg, and Turenne was hastening to the frontier.

The Rhine campaign of 1675 was to employ the last active services of the three greatest commanders of the age; Turenne, Condé, and Montecuccoli. Only a sense of his duty to the King could have urged Condé to take the field again after the campaign of Seneff; his health had so completely failed that, so far as

physical strength was concerned, he was only fitted for the peaceful existence of Chantilly. The chief wish that remained to him was to see his son raised to the dignity of a Commander-in-Chief; an almost pathetic struggle between the professional and the parental instinct is revealed in his suggestion—tentatively made to the King—that M. le Duc should be nominally in command of the ‘army of Flanders’, and that he (Condé) should be at hand, though in no strictly official capacity, to offer advice, without having to undergo the extreme toil of the campaign. The idea, it need scarcely be said, was not entertained by Louis, who disliked Enghien, and who relied on the Prince’s name and prestige, as well as on his generalship, for success. Condé and Turenne were ordered to resume, respectively, the commands they had held in the preceding year. Turenne, ten years older than Condé in actual age, was younger in health and strength, while his military genius seemed only now to have reached its zenith; yet it was rumoured that he, too, had turned his thoughts towards retirement, and that he obeyed from duty rather than from inclination. Be that as it might, the opening of the campaigning season found him in command of twenty thousand men at Schlettstadt, on the Rhine. Condé, at the same time, had joined the troops at Le Catelet, and was preparing to march north and west, towards the Meuse. The army under his command was officially referred to as ‘that which the King will accompany in person’. Louis, fired by his General’s success, would no longer forgo a share of martial glory; but he paid a unique tribute to Condé’s reputation in refusing, outwardly at least, to assume the position of Commander-in-Chief.

For some two months, the ‘army of Flanders’ manœuvred between the Senne and the Meuse, much impeded by the Royal train; for Louis, despite his attitude of self-effacement, could not dispense with the smallest detail of ceremony in his surroundings. The successive reduction of Huy, Tongres, St. Trond, and Tirlemont, formed a series of achievements after his own heart; while the Prince of Orange, awaiting opportunity to check this victorious progress, effected a junction with the Spaniards and fixed his headquarters at Hal, in Brabant. Towards the end of July, Louis left the army and returned to Paris; Condé,

freed from the encumbrance of his presence, was meditating a more boldly offensive course, and had marched eastward, into Hainault, when there fell upon the armies of France a blow such as the death of one man has seldom inflicted on any forces. Turenne, after six weeks of ceaseless endeavour, had forced Montecuccoli to retreat from the banks of the Rhine, as far as Sasbach, on the borders of the Black Forest ; here the Imperialists halted, to await reinforcements ; the French followed close on their track, and a decisive action seemed inevitable. About midday, on July 27th, the Marshal was drawing up his troops for the attack ; already, on the enemy's side, a battery of six light guns, posted opposite the French right, had opened a desultory fire. ' C'en est fait, je les tiens ' : so Turenne spoke, as he surveyed the scene before him ; and his officers wondered, " for it was not his habit to seem assured of success ".¹ An hour later, before the two armies were fairly engaged, a stray shot struck him, and he fell dead. No death could have been more instantaneous ; his staff, who surrounded him, scarcely realised that he had been struck before he lay, a corpse, at their feet. In silence they covered his face with a cloak ; then, as the greatness of their misfortune broke more fully upon them, they gave way to grief, and each man mourned a personal loss. The consternation in all ranks of the army was indescribable, and was equalled by that of the whole country, as news of the crushing blow spread far and wide. Such was the dismay and confusion among the troops, that, in a moment, all prospect of victory had vanished ; Lorges and Vau-brun, the two Lieutenant-Generals who jointly assumed the command, gave up all idea of attacking Sasbach, and retreated across the Rhine, their rearguard harassed by the enemy. For Louis and his ministers, the sense of overpowering misfortune was succeeded by the conviction that only one French subject, now living, could restore order and confidence to the shattered forces. Condé was summoned to leave his command in the Netherlands, and to occupy the vacant post at the head of the ' army of Alsace '. Enghien was to accompany him ; but the chief exertion and responsibility must fall on the Prince alone.

Condé's answer to the summons is in the words of

¹ Ramsay, *Histoire du Vicomte de Turenne*.

a man much broken in spirit, as well as in health : " I own ", he wrote to Louvois, " that I think myself very little fitted to serve the King in the capacity that he has chosen. The work is extremely hard, in that country, and my health is so little to be depended on that I am much afraid of its giving way altogether, especially if cold weather should come on before the end of the campaign ; you will remember that I warned you of this, before starting. I obey, however, and I shall never hesitate to expose my life, and what little health remains to me, in the King's service, or for his satisfaction ; though I fear greatly that I shall not be as useful to him as he expects, and as I should wish ". The day after this letter had been dispatched (August 1st), the Prince left his camp near Ath, and set out on the sixteen days' journey which had to be accomplished before he could assume his new command. One brief glimpse given of his feelings at this time shows how acutely he was conscious of the blank he had been called on to fill, and how little he deserved the charge, which has sometimes been brought against him, of professional jealousy : " I wish ", he said to one of those about him, " that I could talk, if only for two hours, with the shade of M. de Turenne ; so that I might follow his designs, and learn something from his knowledge of the country, and of Montecuccoli's methods " : " You, at least, are safe and well, Monseigneur ", was the ready answer, " and may God preserve you, for your own sake and for that of France ".¹ But Condé knew the full extent of the nation's loss, and shrugged his shoulders for all reply.

On August 18th, the Prince joined the ' army of Alsace ' in the entrenched camp of Châtenois, on the eastern slope of the Vosges. The outlook was by no means reassuring for France. An attempt of the Imperialists to cut off Lorges and Vaubrun at the bridge of Altenheim had been successfully repulsed ; but from another quarter came news of a serious reverse. Condé's old antagonist, Duke Charles of Lorraine, freed, some years since, from a Spanish prison, had joined the alliance against France ; and now achieved the last exploit of his eventful career in the defeat, at Konz-Saarbrück, of the force detached, under Créquî, from the ' army of Flanders ' for guarding

¹ Madame de Sévigné, *Letters*.

the passages of the Moselle. The Imperialists had been reinforced since the day of Sasbach, till their strength was estimated at thirty thousand ; whereas no sign appeared of the French reinforcements promised by Louvois. In these circumstances, Condé would not risk a general action ; the prudence which he had flung to the winds at Seneff returned to him in this last campaign, when, without once exposing his troops in battle, he guarded the frontier till the approach of winter put an end to active hostilities. His first enterprise was the relief of Hagenau, a fortress of some strategical importance, to which Montecuccoli had laid siege, in the hope of securing a base of operations for his advance into Alsace and Lorraine. Condé left his camp on August 19th ; Montecuccoli, warned of his approach, raised the siege, and marched to meet him. For one day, the two armies were in sight of each other ; but the Prince, having attained his object, and saved Hagenau, retreated to Châtenois ; where Montecuccoli, who followed him closely, judged his position too strong for attack. Châtenois, overlooking the eastern entrance of the long defile which traversed the Vosges, could scarcely have been improved upon as a point from which to check further invasion ; and here, for more than two months, Condé maintained his position, resisting all endeavours of his adversary to draw him into the plain below ; but, while the main French army seemed immovable, a detachment of five thousand horse scoured the country, observing the enemy, attacking convoys, and cutting off communications. The Imperialists were the first to tire of these conditions. Like Condé, Montecuccoli was beset by increasing infirmities of age, which made it impossible for him to prolong the campaign throughout the winter ; moreover, his plans were disconcerted by the death of Duke Charles (September 17th), and the consequent withdrawal of the Lorraine forces from the Moselle. The investment of Saverne—the last definite enterprise of the Imperialists—was abandoned after a few days ; though Condé gave not the smallest sign of leaving Châtenois for the relief. By the end of October, the long-delayed French reinforcements were at hand ; on November 1st, Montecuccoli's forces were retreating from Alsace, across the Rhine ; and, a fortnight later, Condé, seeing his task fulfilled, thankfully

relinquished his last command. While Montecuccoli placed his resignation in the Emperor's hands, protesting—so it was said—that he would never risk his reputation against a less worthy adversary than Condé or Turenne, M. le Prince returned to Chantilly, and there found the honoured retirement which was to be his to the end of his life. The one inducement which would have drawn him again into the field, was, perhaps not unreasonably, withheld. In the spring of the following year he was invited, though not ordered, to resume his command on the German frontier; and, being more than ever incapable of undertaking the whole work of a campaign, he renewed the suggestion that his son should share his duties. Once more the King refused; thereby setting a final seal on Condé's withdrawal from public life. "Thus", Bossuet declaimed, in the last inevitable comparison between the Prince and Turenne, "that we might be shown, in all things, the great, but widely different characters of these two men, one, struck down suddenly, dies for his country like another Judas Maccabæus; . . . the other, raised, like David, to the highest pitch of glory by his deeds of arms, dies, like him, in his bed, praising God, and giving an example to his family; leaving all hearts filled with the brilliance of his life, and with the peacefulness of his death".¹

¹ Bossuet, *Oraisons Funèbres*.

CHAPTER XXVI

LAST YEARS

1675-1686

THE earliest published biographies of Condé record that his retirement from Court was attributed, in some quarters, less to his failing health, than to a fear of the humiliations which the King still occasionally laid upon him. There seems no doubt, from contemporary evidence, that the Prince's health provided him with a perfectly valid excuse; but his evident anxiety that his withdrawal should be definitely recognised and approved, may well have been caused by an abiding sense of insecurity in the Royal favour. "He feared", says his chronicler, "that illness might prevent him from paying his court regularly, and that the King might attribute his failure to a want of due respect, rather than to infirmity".¹

The state of the Court during the last years of Condé's life, did indeed offer complications enough to daunt any Prince or courtier not in the prime of vigour. Louis, as the natural result of unceasing adulation, grew daily more requiring, and more inconsiderate of those around him; while countless difficulties arose over the precedence to be accorded to the reigning favourites, and to the illegitimate scions of Royalty who were now of an age to appear constantly in public. Since his return from exile, Condé had looked on his duties at Court as a manifestation of loyalty rather than as a means of enjoyment; and it was with infinite relief that he gained permission from the King to discontinue the regular attendance expected from most persons of his rank. Had his direct object been to increase his prestige in the eyes of his fellow-subjects, he could have taken no wiser course; whatever might be hinted by a few unfriendly spirits, there

¹ *Histoire de la Vie de Louis de Bourbon*, 1694.

is no doubt that this voluntary withdrawal, following on two successful campaigns, shed the halo of such a distinction as no public bid for popularity could have achieved. Louis might still mortify him, from time to time, by reminders that even Princes could only hold rank from the King; but to the Court, and to the country at large, Condé in his later years became a figure of almost traditional greatness; no foreigner of note was held to have exhausted the glories of France until he had been privileged to behold 'M. le Prince le héros' in the setting of Chantilly.

The attitude of society towards him is by no one more clearly indicated than by Madame de Sévigné, who, as the kinswoman and friend of Bussy-Rabutin, had doubtless heard many things to the Prince's disadvantage,¹ yet seldom mentions him, in her letters, without some tribute of admiration. She writes with something like envy of Madame de Lafayette, who has been honoured by a visit from him in Paris; and she records his sayings, even when they prove that the love of raising a titter among the company had outlasted his youth. "Have you heard of 'transparencies'?" she asks her daughter, after a ball at Versailles, where the new fashion had been introduced: "They consist of complete dresses of the most beautiful gold brocade worn under transparent black dresses of English point lace or of gauze. . . . M. le Prince sent a message from Chantilly to the ladies, that the transparent overdresses would be a thousand times more beautiful if they wore them over nothing but their own fair skins". As may be supposed from these allusions, Condé's retired life was by no means that of a man who has forsaken the world and its interests. At Chantilly he was surrounded by a circle of friends no less talented, though more sedate, than in the far-distant days of the 'angels' and the 'damoiseaux'. Writers and learned men of all conditions were welcomed by him, and never failed to find their merits appreciated. M. le Prince, as the central figure, was effective as ever, despite many apparent disadvantages. Primi Visconti, the Italian envoy, and writer of memoirs, found the 'hero',

¹ The publication, in 1665, of *L'Histoire Amoureuse des Gaules*,—in which Condé, with many of the companions of his youth, plays an unedifying part,—and the tracing of its authorship to Bussy-Rabutin, made an irreparable breach between him and the Prince.

to whom he was duly presented, an old man, crippled with gout, much addicted to snuff, unkempt, and 'looking like a brigand'; but was none the less impressed by his countenance, 'which was indeed that of an eagle', and charmed by his universal knowledge and polished language, 'worthy of the great reputation which he has made for himself'.¹

Apart from more intellectual distractions, Condé's time and thoughts were largely occupied with the cares of his family; whose affairs he handled with much energy and some practical experience. Time had not diminished the sense of his obligations as head of the House, nor, apparently, his personal interest in his grandchildren. In the course of fourteen years (1666-1680) four sons and six daughters were born to the Duc and Duchesse d'Enghien; and though the excitement caused by the birth of 'Mademoiselle de Bourbon' can scarcely have been renewed in the case of each of her younger sisters, yet not one of their number had any cause to complain of neglect. Bourdelot, after an adventurous career, was now once more installed as physician to the household; and had orders, whenever the Prince was parted from his grandchildren, to report to him, without fail, every detail of their health and conduct. These letters were dispatched with equal regularity when Condé was absent on a campaign, or when, after his retirement, he remained at Chantilly, while Enghien and his family occupied the Hôtel de Condé in Paris; they are written with the minutest care, and with the fullest confidence in a responsive interest. Each little Prince, or Princess, was the bearer of a sonorous title; Bourdelot notifies His Highness 'that Mademoiselle de Montmorency has a tooth'; or that Mademoiselle d'Enghien 'boasts of taking her soup like a great girl'; or that Mademoiselle de Charolois—the future Duchesse du Maine—has cried herself ill because her tame bird has been eaten by a cat. The doctor's post was no sinecure; the records of the time show an appalling loss of infant life in Royal and princely households, and, judging by their antecedents, the children of the House of Condé had perhaps even less chance of vigorous health than many of their contemporaries. Of the Prince's four grandsons, one only—Louis de Bourbon, born

¹ Primi Visconti, *Mémoires de la Cour de Louis XIV*, trans. J. Lemoine.

in 1668—grew to manhood; but the third son, a little Comte de Clermont, who died at three years old, still lives in Bourdelot's description of him: "un gentil bébé, qui salue tout le monde et qui voudrait bien parler".¹ Two daughters also died in infancy; while the four who, with some difficulty, survived, were of such diminutive stature that later they were known at Court as 'les poupées du Sang'. M. le Prince, contemplating them, once observed that if, in succeeding generations, his race grew any smaller, it would vanish altogether. Of beauty they had small share amongst them; but in wit and audacity, one, at least, maintained the family tradition; the Duchesse du Maine—noted for her brilliant intelligence, her reckless enterprises, and her overbearing will—was said to have inherited more of her grandfather's spirit than any other one of his descendants.²

The education of the Duc de Bourbon, the only surviving son of the House, was as carefully superintended by the Prince as that of Henri-Jules had been, and was certainly begun under more favourable conditions. After a course of instruction at home by Jesuit tutors, the little Duke, at the age of eleven, was conducted by his father and his grandfather to the Collège de Clermont, in Paris, where he was respectfully welcomed by 'a great number of children of quality'. The Duc de Bourbon was not wanting in intelligence—few of his race were open to that reproach; but as a scholar he was far inferior even to Henri-Jules, and never for an instant rivalled the success of M. le Prince. His teachers, the Jesuit Fathers, who corresponded regularly with Condé, are nothing if not candid in their reports. "If Monseigneur le Duc de Bourbon had been more diligent over his theme", writes an indignant professor, "we should have more news to send to Your Highness". The 'theme' in question is enclosed as an indictment: "Your Highness will see that, besides the slowness of composition, I have to complain of two or three gross blunders, which are caused by nothing but carelessness. . . . Monseigneur le Duc de Bourbon is very much frightened to think of the answer

¹ Extracts from the *Chantilly Archives*, published in *Trois Familiars du Grand Condé*, J. Lemoine and A. Lichtenberger.

² "Elle avait du courage à l'excès, entreprenante, audacieuse, furieuse" (Saint-Simon).

that Your Highness will send ; I told him that I was writing to Chantilly ".¹ The Duke's teachers were well supported, if, at any moment, they could threaten the anger of M. le Prince as a punishment for idleness. Their pupil left them, at the end of five years' instruction, as a fairly accomplished young prince ; exceedingly ugly, it must be owned, and with a full share of the family malice, but possessed of enough worldly advantages to be chosen by the King as a bridegroom for his youngest and most beautiful daughter, 'Mademoiselle de Nantes'.²

If Condé was denied the joy of seeing any of his direct descendants win glory in the field, he could still take a vicarious share in military operations through his intercourse with Luxembourg, and with other of his former officers. It was on Luxembourg that the King's choice had fallen to hold the command which Condé had refused, and, failing his own son, there was no man by whom the Prince would more gladly have been replaced. Yet the campaign of 1676 served only to deepen the sense of loss throughout the country, and to inspire the saying that " France has had nothing but misfortunes since Condé has been at Chantilly, and Turenne at St. Denis ". Luxembourg suffered the greatest reverse of his whole career in the failure of his attempt to relieve Philippsbourg ; the capitulation of the town (September 9th) to Charles of Lorraine, son and successor of the late Duke, was received in Paris with an outburst of dismay and indignation. Even the successes of two following campaigns, and the triumphant conclusion of the Peace of Nymeguen on terms which seemed to establish the ascendancy of Louis over all his enemies, failed to restore Luxembourg to favour, either with the people or with the King. His return to France in 1679 was immediately followed by an experience stranger, and more humiliating, than any that had befallen him in the field ; namely, his imprisonment in the Bastille on the charge of sorcery, and of direct dealings with the powers of evil.

Had the mysterious crimes which gave rise to the noted ' affaire des poisons ' been brought to light some years earlier, it seems probable that Condé, no less than

¹ A.C.

² Louise-Françoise de Bourbon, daughter of Madame de Montespan. The marriage took place in 1686.

Luxembourg, might have found himself among the accused. The details of these crimes, and of the subsequent proceedings against suspected persons, have been so exhaustively treated by competent hands,¹ that they need not here be dwelt on, except as they affected the Prince. Both Condé and Luxembourg had, at various times, indulged in practices half-childish, half-impious, and wholly characteristic of an age in which scepticism and superstition flourished side by side; as when, in days before the Fronde, Condé, Bourdelot, and the Princess Palatine, locked themselves into a room—not without some fear of instant destruction—to burn a supposed relic of the True Cross. Despite the advance of learning, 'black magic' still held sway as a recognised power, and its name was often used as a cover for the most infamous purposes. Condé, with advancing years, had found more reputable means of pursuing his alchemistic, or theological, researches; but Luxembourg, at heart more truly a sceptic than the Prince had ever been, maintained constant dealings with 'magicians' of the lowest character. When, after the conclusion of peace, the Marshal broke definitely with Louvois, to whose ill-will he attributed a great part of his reverses, the Minister lost no time in turning his knowledge of such intercourse to account. Through his agency, Luxembourg was cited to appear before the special court of inquiry which had been summoned to investigate the recent cases of poisoning, and the methods of the 'sorceresses' and fortune-tellers of Paris, whose name was legion. The Marshal's character was not one to support rigorous examination; no definite crime was laid to his charge, but evidence was easily forthcoming which could procure his arrest on suspicion. For four months he was kept in close confinement in the Bastille; visited, at intervals, by members of the court of inquiry, who spared him no humiliation in their cross-questioning. Finally, since nothing beyond certain ill-judged and undignified transactions in minor forms of occultism could be proved against him, he was grudgingly released, to find himself an exile from Court, with a fortune much impaired by penalties.

Condé, in the comparative seclusion of Chantilly,

¹ See *L'Affaire des Poisons*, J. Funck-Brentano; and *Le Tapissier de Notre-Dame*, Marquis de Ségur.

was only indirectly influenced by the proceedings which convulsed the Court and seemed to threaten members of half the great houses in France. Partly for Luxembourg's own sake, and partly for that of his sister, the Duchess Isabelle, the Prince strained every nerve on his behalf. From his own experience he was able to offer practical help when Luxembourg, after his release, was forced, by want of money, to introduce some order into his household affairs; he even obtained from the King an 'arrêt de surséance' or act of suspension against some of the Marshal's most pressing debts. The result of Luxembourg's disgrace which touched Condé most nearly was a last ineffectual attempt, made by Louis, to force from him a promise that he would accept a command in the event of war breaking out afresh, and thus spare both King and minister the difficulty of transferring a Marshal of France, at one stroke, from the Bastille to the head of an army. But the Prince, in old age and in falling health, was not to be prevailed on to risk his own reputation and the country's safety. He consented only to accompany the King on a tour of inspection of the fortresses on the northern frontier; and to give advice on matters connected with their defence. After this expedition—the longest that he ever made from Chantilly, after his last campaign—he returned to a life of increased retirement. He still, however, made a point of appearing at Court, at long intervals; and "on these occasions"—so an early chronicler maintains—"the wisest courtiers followed him closely, in order to study his manner of paying court to the King".¹

A great part of the happiness, if also of the anxiety, of Condé's last years, was provided by his unruly, but much-loved nephews, the Princes of Conti;² the children of the marriage he had so bitterly resented, between his brother and a niece of Mazarin. The death of the Princess of Conti, a few years after that of her husband, had left the chief care of their sons to Condé and to Madame de Longueville. The two boys grew towards manhood; both so gifted, and so charming, that Condé forgot his hatred of their origin; indeed,

¹ *Hist. de la Vie de Louis de Bourbon.*

² Louis-Armand de Bourbon, born 1661; died 1685. François-Louis de Bourbon, born 1664; married, 1688, his cousin, Marie-Thérèse de Bourbon, Condé's eldest granddaughter; died 1709.

the favour he showed them roused perceptible jealousy, at times, in the family of the Duc d'Enghien. The elder, Louis-Armand de Bourbon, who succeeded to his father's title, became, like his cousin the Duc de Bourbon, a son-in-law of the King; his bride was 'Mademoiselle de Blois', daughter of Louise de la Vallière. This marriage, which took place in January, 1680, was the first ordained by Louis for any one of his illegitimate children, and was looked on, by the majority of princes and nobles, with envy slightly tempered by disapproval; some doubts were privately felt as to whether such an alliance was befitting for a Bourbon prince of lawful birth. Viewing the custom of the time, it seems probable that few of those who cavilled at the match would have refused a like connection with the reigning House. Condé, for his part, did not hesitate. To him, since his restoration to loyalty, the King embodied every law; Mademoiselle de Blois had been arbitrarily legitimised; and what more than the Royal decree could be needed to make her a fit bride even for a monarch? Whatever feelings might be admitted in secret, the whole Court outwardly held the same opinion. In the Carmelite convent of the Rue St. Jacques, 'Sœur Louise de la Miséricorde'¹ received an endless succession of congratulatory visits on her daughter's betrothal. No sense of incongruity seems to have been felt, on either side; those who saw Sœur Louise welcoming her guests in the convent parlour were filled with admiration of her grace and dignity. Condé was among the first to pay the required compliment; the Convent of St. Jacques, chiefly known to him through Madame de Longueville, may well have recalled yet other associations; for here Marthe du Vigeon had died, after twenty years spent within the walls. His nephew was doing as he had done in marrying, before he was twenty, a bride barely in her teens; but a greater contrast to Claire-Clémence, in the power of pleasing, than Mademoiselle de Blois, it would be hard to imagine. At Court, the extreme youth, and the romantic affection, of the betrothed pair, made them a constant source of amusement. Louis would torment them by pretending that the settlements were causing difficulty, and that the wedding must be indefinitely postponed; Conti never failed to fall into paroxysms

¹ Louise de la Vallière had taken the veil in 1676.

of despair at the suggestion ; and the little Princess, in floods of tears, would console him by assurances that she could never love another man ! When the day of the ceremony came, the King, with his unfailing instinct for a right effect, contrived that the arrangements should combine splendour with a certain air of friendliness, and of a family gathering ; “ *il marie sa fille, en faisant des compliments, tout comme un autre* ”.¹ The display of dress and jewels, however, was the most magnificent that could be devised. On the bridegroom's side, the responsibility for this weighty matter was borne by Madame de Langeron, lady-in-waiting to the Duchesse d'Enghien, and a recognised authority on all such subjects ; the costumes worn by Conti, by his younger brother, and by the whole House of Condé, were of her design. Urged by her persuasions, the household concentrated their chief energies on inducing the head of the family—whose habitual carelessness Primi Visconti had not exaggerated—to let himself be arrayed in a wedding garment. Their efforts were crowned with such striking success that even the bride was not greeted with more comment or admiration than M. le Prince. He had consented to be, not only gorgeously clad, but also elaborately shaved ; a fact in itself arousing much remark. Once in the barber's hands, he could offer no resistance ; he had been brushed, curled, and powdered ; and the head of hair which had been famous in his youth, still stood him in such good stead that he had no need to fear its comparison with the long wigs then in fashion. So, at least, Madame de Sévigné asserts, in a burst of enthusiasm ; declaring, further, that in this guise he was ‘ the finest-looking man at Court ’.² His doublet, with jewelled buttons, is also described ; and, above all, his sword, the hilt of which was set with diamonds ; as became

—‘ la famosa spada
Al cui valore ogni vittoria è certa ’.³

Yet, even in the midst of this universal outward goodwill, there were signs of the King's watchfulness against

¹ Madame de Sévigné.

² Letter of January 17, 1680.

³ Tasso, *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Canto ii., stanza 69. This quotation is made in connection with M. le Prince by Madame de Sévigné on two occasions.

any presumption on the part of the Princes of the Blood ; the terms employed in signing the marriage contract, and the visits of ceremony to be exchanged on all hands, alike gave rise to petty and humiliating dissensions. These were no sooner quieted than Condé thankfully regained the peaceful atmosphere of Chantilly ; while his nephews, left temporarily to their own devices, started on a swift downfall from the Royal favour.

In the somewhat ambiguous position which Conti, after his marriage, was forced to occupy, the only course by which he could hope to retain the King's good graces was that of living strictly the life of a courtier. For this career, however, neither he nor his brother, François de Bourbon, Prince de la Rochesur-yon, was any more inclined than Condé himself had been in his youth. Soon there were rumours of wild dissipations indulged in by the two Princes ; of the King having set spies upon them, and so proved their defiance of his express commands ; and of their indignation at such methods of control. The next stage in their disfavour was brought about by an escapade which Condé, even while he deprecated it, found no difficulty in pardoning. A brief experience of campaigning, in the summer of 1684, fired both young men with a passion of martial fervour. The atmosphere of the Court, where infinitely more pomp, and less gaiety, were to be found than in the earlier years of the reign, became intolerable to them after peace was restored ; they asked, and obtained the Royal permission to offer their military services to the King of Poland. The whole business of their departure was proceeding on highly decorous lines, when suddenly an alarm was set on foot that Louis might be about to retract his consent. Sooner than face this dreadful possibility, the Princes of Conti flung prudence to the winds. Without farewells or warning, they disappeared ; leaving Paris unattended, and at dead of night, only to be heard of from beyond the frontier. The situation in Poland had meanwhile been tranquillised ; but these two resolute knights-errant were not to be disappointed of their quest. War still raged in Hungary ; and thither they bent their way, to be enrolled as ' volontaires ' in the Imperial army. The breach of duty, and of etiquette, was so flagrant that any prospect

of forgiveness seemed hopelessly remote : " Madame, I can refuse nothing from your hand ", said Louis, when the Princess of Conti presented exculpatory letters from her husband and brother-in-law, " but you shall see what use I make of these " ; and forthwith burnt the letters, unread.¹ For some months Condé was torn between a sense of the King's displeasure, and of his own exultation at the spirit displayed by his nephews ; reports of whose brilliant courage in action reached him from many sources. By the end of the campaigning season, Louis had so far relented as to allow the delinquents to re-enter France ; but before they could appear, to plead their cause, a yet far graver offence had been proved against them. True to the system of perpetual surveillance, the King had directed that all letters passing to or from ' MM. de Conti ' should, if possible, be seized for inspection. As a result of this order, a large budget, dispatched to the Princes by several friends in Paris, was wrested from a messenger on the German frontier. The contents were examined, and revealed a fact so appalling as to be scarcely credible to the loyal mind. The writers of these heinous documents had been suddenly and irresistibly smitten by the aspect of ' le Roi Soleil ', as seen from a purely humorous point of view ; the confiscated packet was nothing less than a collection of letters describing, in ribald terms, the King's habits, his demeanour at the play, or in reviewing his troops, his subjection to Madame de Maintenon, and many other like matters. To any irreverent young man, gifted with a sense of the ludicrous, Louis offered himself an easy prey ; and since two of the chief offenders were sons of La Rochefoucauld, the subject was likely to receive full justice. The tone of the letters implicated the absent Princes fully as much as their correspondents ; and the hope of forgiveness that Condé had begun to cherish flickered and died. Even the Princess of Conti was not excepted from disgrace ; the letters included one in which she complained bitterly, to her husband, of the dullness of her daily walks with the King and Madame de Maintenon. The punishment for her disloyal and unfilial comments was entirely characteristic ; on next approaching the Royal presence, she was ' foudroyée d'un regard ', and withdrew in tears. Louis had enough

¹ *Journal de Dangeau.*

dignity to avoid showing any violent displeasure towards the two Princes. He still sanctioned their return to France, and even allowed his son-in-law to appear at Court ; but no delusions were entertained as to their chance of forgiveness.

Conti was not fated to struggle long against adverse favour ; within three months of his return, he died of small-pox, after only two days' illness. His brother, and successor in the title, had not the same claim of relationship to outweigh his offence ; and showed, moreover, little inclination to abase himself before the Royal frown. The only person in authority whom he seemed in the smallest degree anxious to propitiate was M. le Prince ; an easy matter, since, in Condé's affections, this youngest nephew far surpassed the Duc de Bourbon, and came near to rivalling Henri-Jules himself. Certainly, if contemporary accounts are to be believed, François de Bourbon was possessed of extraordinary personal magnetism ; St. Simon, while accusing him unsparingly of heartlessness, and of other faults, admits that 'even his defects had an infinite grace'. With all the wit and intellectual capacity of his father's race, he had none of the malicious spirit which had made them feared and hated. He was adored at Court, in the army, and by the people ; and though it was said of him that he never truly loved his friends ; that 'he needed, and had them, as one needs, and has, furniture' ;¹ yet no knowledge of his failings ever detracted from their affection for him. The delight he showed in Condé's society may have been selfish, but it was none the less as sincere as it was mutual. In him the Prince found a response to military enthusiasm which no other member of his family could supply ; together they talked of past battles, and of the career which the younger man hoped to frame for himself. The fact of his disgrace would have weighed lightly on the new Prince of Conti, but for the knowledge that, lacking the Royal favour, he could never hope for military preferment in his own country. Enghien, partly jealous, and partly fearful lest Conti's perpetual visits to Chantilly might cause offence to the King, showed disapproval as openly as he ever dared to do towards his father ; but in vain ; his cautious representations produced not the slightest effect. Yet neither loyalty, nor expediency, allowed

¹ St. Simon.

Condé to underrate, even for a moment, the importance of the King's displeasure. He knew, only too well, the extent of its power, and what withering influence it might exert upon an opening life. From the first, he spared no pains to restore his nephew to at least nominal favour. The chief obstacle lay in the attitude of the culprit, who showed no eagerness in offering the expected submission; and here M. le Prince, mindful of his own youth, may have found some difficulty in urging the point. Months passed, and no prospect of reconciliation appeared. Conti spent his time at Chantilly, enjoying, despite all fears for the future, his uncle's society, and that of the countless men of note who came and went at the castle; a privilege which he was intelligent enough to value to the full.

As a social and intellectual experience, the life led by inhabitants of Chantilly was perhaps unique; it would have been hard to find a more gifted, or more catholic assembly than that of the guests whom Condé entertained in his 'retreat'. No restriction of views prevailed, either among the company, or in the permanent staff of the household; the latter included Bourdelot, together with the pious Jesuit chaplain, Père Bergier; and with Labruyère, who acted as history teacher to the Duc de Bourbon. Huguenot refugees, after the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes, found safety at Chantilly, where the traditions of the house still offered them protection. Condé's literary and theological interests had never waned, from his youth up; and now that the time for war was past, had freer scope. Boileau, Racine, and La Fontaine, were constant visitors; it was La Fontaine, who, in a letter addressed to the elder Prince of Conti, so well put into words the sense of completeness conveyed to all those who witnessed the peaceful evening of Condé's tempestuous life. He had not renounced the world, yet he had found leisure and retirement to 'possess himself'; 'jouir de soi', is La Fontaine's untranslatable phrase. "His knowledge embraces all things; the Court, and the camp; the pleasures of conversation, and of books; of gardens and of buildings".¹ Many were the heated, though friendly, discussions on recent works of prose and poetry, which took place between host and guests; for Condé, from the days of the 'disputes'

¹ La Fontaine, *Comparaison de César, d'Alexandre, et de M. le Prince*,

at Bourges, had been as formidable in argument as on the field of battle. The fire of youth returned to him in defence of his opinions ; and the less he was justified, the more vehement he became ; till, on one occasion, Boileau, " startled by light that flashed from his eyes ", remarked, in an aside, to a fellow-guest, " I shall always agree with M. le Prince when he is in the wrong ".¹ The resolve was not likely to be persisted in ; Boileau knew Condé too well to imagine that servile agreement would please him, and the debates continued with as much vigour as before. There was ample food for controversy in the innumerable writings submitted to M. le Prince for criticism and approval. Perrault, author of the fairy-tales ; Saci, the Jansenist theologian ; Molière, in whose play of *Le Mariage Forcé* Henri-Jules once took a part ; all were among the many who visited, or corresponded with, the Prince, in order to receive his judgment on their works. Courtiers and soldiers mingled with men of letters ; Luxembourg, Boufflers, Créqui, d'Humières, and a host of others, came often to Chantilly, seeking advice from the acknowledged head of their profession. There, too, came, with ever-increasing intimacy, the great churchmen of the time ; Bossuet, Bourdaloue, and Fénelon. The records of Chantilly bear witness to many interests which the Prince shared with Bossuet, in particular. The Bishop writes of Church questions, and of books : " the Latin book, which Your Highness wished to show me, on the liberty of the Gallican Church ".² Their intercourse was not limited to theology ; they were constant and desperate adversaries at chess ; at other times, Bossuet was instructed in the principles which governed the far-famed water-works in the gardens of Chantilly. This last subject proved so engrossing that Condé sent his ' fontenier ', or chief designer of fountains, to carry out a scheme at Meaux. " I am delighted ", he writes, " that my fountain-maker gives you satisfaction. When there are no means of doing any great service to a friend, there is some comfort, at least, in doing a small one ; and as there is no person living, I may say, for whom I have more affection than I have for you, and as it grieves me to have no opportunity of serving you in matters of importance, I am the

¹ *Mémoires de L. Racine, sur la vie de son père.*

² *A.C.*, July 4, 1685.

more glad to do anything which gives you pleasure".¹ Bossuet showed himself entirely worthy of the attention. "I am now so perfect in the science of hydraulics", he writes triumphantly, after the 'fontenier's' visit, "that Your Highness will never again have to rebuke my stupidity (*mes asneries*). I am resolved to fly from you no more".²

Over thirty years had passed since the day when Bossuet, a young student from Dijon, had sustained his public 'dispute', before the Prince, and had entered the College of Navarre. The friendship which grew out of that first acquaintance had bridged wide differences of thought and principle. To its growing influence must be ascribed no small share in the change which, towards the end of his life, was wrought in Condé's religious views; a change so definite, and so acknowledged, as to be reasonably called his 'conversion'. How far his neglect of observances had been the result of carelessness, and how far of actual disbelief in their efficacy, cannot be told; but it is certain that while he never lost interest in the study of religion, he had long abandoned all Catholic practices, including those Easter rites to which even the least devout usually adhered. Latterly, however, other influences, confirming that of Bossuet, had been at work; forces to which a highly-strung, imaginative temperament like that of the Prince could not but respond. He had seen the penitence of Madame de Longueville, and how her faith sustained her in grief, in illness and in death; he had seen the Princess Palatine, after years of open and defiant atheism, find peace in renewing her submission to the Church. Of the inner working of mind, or of conscience, no one can speak in detail; all that can be known is that Condé's conversion—like every other conversion worthy of the name—was only accomplished after much mental and spiritual effort. He did not, as did many of his contemporaries, slip back easily and almost mechanically into the pious observances which, in youth, had been a second nature; and which, it may be added, the ascendancy of Madame de Maintenon had recently brought into fashion. He felt the need of a distinct and open profession of his faith, and of his penitence. His course of action proves his sincerity more clearly than any words. Had he merely wished to conform for

¹ A.C., September, 1685.

² A.C., October 9, 1685.

the sake of appearances, nothing would have been simpler than for him to go through the form of confession with one of the two or three Jesuit fathers who were constantly in residence at Chantilly ; good and learned men, who yet, if one may judge from their writings, would have thought it no less than their duty to give M. le Prince an easy shrift. But Condé would apply to none of these ; he looked for a priest with greater consciousness of authority than could have been found in one who was also a dependant. Even Bossuet, in this case, could hardly be relied upon ; it would have been hard, in their particular circumstances, to change their relation from that of friends to that of priest and penitent. The confessor from whom the Prince sought advice and absolution was one who, with good reason, was accounted as little a respecter of persons as any man in France. Condé's acquaintance with him dated from the schooldays they had spent together at Bourges ; when the Prince of nine years old had looked up with respect to Étienne Deschamps, a scholar of sixteen. Since that time, Deschamps had become an eminent member of the Order of Jesuits ; he was even suggested for the post of confessor to the King ; a choice which, as it soon appeared, would have entailed many complications. Once he was prevailed on to act as a substitute for the more indulgent priest who usually filled that office ; but as he firmly refused to grant Louis absolution unless Madame de Montespan received her dismissal, his ministrations were not asked again, in that quarter. Condé's intercourse with the Jesuits had brought him in touch with Père Deschamps at various times, but there is no reason to suppose that they were on terms of any intimacy ; Deschamps was, no doubt, astonished by a request from the Prince to visit him at Chantilly, and still more so when he discovered the purpose for which his presence was needed. The household of Chantilly were first perplexed, and later, struck with amazement. The priest's visit fell in Holy Week, and from Tuesday to Saturday he passed the whole of each day alone with M. le Prince. Condé's penitence was apparently of a more satisfactory nature than that of the King ; he was duly absolved, and, on Easter Day, in the private chapel of the castle, he received the Communion, for the first time in seventeen years. Then, that he might make every reparation

in his power, he summoned the members of his household, from the greatest to the least, and asked their pardon for the bad example he had set them hitherto.¹ From that day forward he lived in accordance with all the ordinances of his Church ; without exaggeration or display, but with a full resolve that his submission should be as public as his neglect had been. On the Whit Sunday following (June 1685) he was in Paris, and attended Mass at St. Sulpice, to the wonder of all beholders. The journal of the Marquis de Dangeau records, as a memorable event, that " M. le Prince performed his devotions at St. Sulpice, his parish church ; there was an immense crowd of people, who were much edified by his good action ". Condé had passed through many vicissitudes in the favour of the people of Paris ; he had been blessed, feared, and reviled in turn. Now, when almost for the last time he appeared among them, he was received once more with acclamation. All, save his victories, was forgotten ; the crowd saw only, in that infirm and shrunken figure, " M. le Prince le héros ".

In the last two or three years of his life, Condé seldom left Chantilly, except on occasions of the greatest family importance. Constant attacks of gout and fever had so weakened and crippled him, that he could scarcely walk even a few steps without help. He still enjoyed his friends' society, and was keenly interested, as ever, in all leading questions of the day ; but though his mind retained its vigour and acuteness, it was clear that his bodily strength was failing fast. His greatest efforts were made in the hope of securing the Royal pardon for his beloved nephew of Conti. The King was wavering ; he had not forgiven Conti's offence, nor did he ever wholly forgive it ; but he felt that, as on some former occasions, appearances would be strongly against him if he persisted in outward severity. The vicarious apologies offered through a subject of Condé's age and distinction could not, with any decency, be altogether ignored. Louis, as was his wont in such cases, " gave with one hand, and withheld with the other ". He allowed the Prince to bring his nephew to Court (May, 1685), but treated Conti, on his arrival, with marked coldness ; again, at the chapter of the Saint-Esprit, held in July, 1686, Conti was invested with

¹ *Mémoires du Marquis de Sourches.*

the Order, but was commanded to leave the presence almost before the full rites were completed. The investiture, which took place at Versailles, was the last ceremony at which M. le Prince appeared in public. He came, not only to plead his nephew's cause, but to present his grandson as another 'novice', or newly-made knight. No fewer than four young princes were invested, and each one, after receiving the Order, was brought forward by two older knights to do his homage. First came the twelve-year-old Duc de Chartres—the future Regent Orleans—supported by Monsieur and by the Dauphin; next, the Duc de Bourbon, with his father and grandfather; then followed Conti, with two non-Royal Dukes—Chaulnes and St. Simon; and lastly, the Duc du Maine,¹ led by Créqui and the Duc de St. Aignan. The spectacle, with the gold and crimson robes of the knights, was magnificent; but Condé was so much exhausted by his share in it, that those present watched him in alarm, "almost expecting him to die before their eyes". Conti's abrupt dismissal, that same evening, was a poor reward for such toil; and the disappointment which fell crushingly upon M. le Prince was shared by the younger courtiers, who had yielded, one and all, to the charm that few men could resist.

The summer that followed passed uneventfully at Chantilly, save for the news of the King's illness; which, about August, was first considered serious, and in the course of the next four months, necessitated two critical operations. The Prince visited him once at Versailles, and was graciously received; but Conti's pardon seemed more than ever remote. Louis, who, throughout his illness, showed all the courage of his race, suffered little or no change to be made in the routine of his surroundings; as usual, he moved with all his retinue to Fontainebleau in October. Scarcely was the Court installed, when the little Duchesse de Bourbon, who occupied a suite of rooms in the palace, fell ill of small-pox. The tidings spread consternation in the House of Condé. Already, Louise-Françoise de Bourbon had won all hearts in her husband's family; where, both as the King's daughter and as wife—at ten years old—of the heir, she was necessarily a person of the first importance. To M. le Prince

¹ Son of the King and of Madame le Montespan.

it seemed not only natural, but imperative, that he should travel to Fontainebleau, at whatever cost, and ascertain that nothing was left undone for her welfare ; more especially at a time when the whole Court was preoccupied over the impending operation on the King. On his arrival, Condé found the child so ill that her life was almost despaired of, and for several days there could be no question of his leaving Fontainebleau. The fear of infection, or of ' le mauvais air ', which was considered harmful even to those who had already had small-pox, caused the King to banish the Duc de Bourbon from the palace ; nevertheless, the sick-room, according to custom, was invaded by visitors of every degree. Madame de Maintenon was in constant attendance ; and Louis himself, regardless of his illness, would have entered the room, but for M. le Prince, who, sooner than let him run such a risk, stood before the door to bar the way : " I am not strong enough to keep Your Majesty out by force ", he said ; " but if you come in it will only be over my body ".¹ To his own risk, whether great or small, Condé paid no heed whatever ; he visited his grandson's wife every day, till at the end of a fortnight she was pronounced out of danger. From that time, her convalescence was rapid ; but anxiety and effort had told upon the Prince, and he was prostrated by fever and weakness. Conti, alarmed by the latest accounts, wrote from Paris imploring leave to join his uncle, protesting that he wished nothing so much as to be near him, and had not the slightest fear of small-pox infection. Bergier, the chaplain, brought this letter to Condé, who was deeply touched, but deprecated the risk of a Prince still in disgrace appearing at Fontainebleau without a Royal summons. " Tell my nephew ", he said, " that if he loves me, he will stay where he is ".² December 12th was the day fixed for M. le Prince to set out for Chantilly ; he had made all necessary arrangements, and spoke of meeting his friends in Paris ; but, within three days of the appointed date, the conviction forced itself upon him that he would never again leave Fontainebleau alive. Both in illness and in battle, he had already seen death at too close quarters to be dismayed

¹ *Mémoires de Sourches.*

² Bergier, *La Vie et les Actions de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé*, published 1690.

at its approach. To his attendants he said, with much composure, "I see that I am about to make a longer journey than I expected";¹ and thenceforward set about his preparations for that passage into the unseen, as calmly as he had faced the road to Chantilly.

"De cette race de Bourbon", Brantôme wrote, many years before Condé's birth; "ils sont tous braves et vaillants, et n'ont jamais été malade de la fièvre poltronne". The lives of some later Princes must be held to qualify this magnificent statement; yet history scarcely bears record of one true Bourbon, who, if conscious in his last hours, did not seem to be upheld by the tradition of his race, and by the conviction that the eyes of all the world must be turned upon his death-bed. On Condé, since his conversion, there rested the double responsibility of dying as a good Catholic, and as a Premier Prince of the Blood; and it may safely be said that no Bourbon, of any time, ever brought greater courage to such a task.

The news that reached Chantilly had brought the Duchesse d'Enghien to Fontainebleau in the first days of December. Her husband was at Versailles; the King had gone thither to submit to the prescribed operation, and etiquette demanded that as many as possible of his chief subjects should be in close attendance. Henri-Jules would have hastened to Fontainebleau, as soon as the accounts of his father's illness became disquieting; but Condé, though fully intending to see his son at the last, was no less anxious that some member of his family should be near the King at such a crisis. "Let him stay at Court", he said, when the Duke's message reached him, "I will let him know when it is time for him to come; it may be sooner than either of us would wish".² Early on December 10th, his doctor, whom he urged to speak openly, told him that "he would do well to think of the Sacraments". A messenger was instantly dispatched to Enghien, and another, in even greater haste, to Père Deschamps. Twenty-four hours, at least, must pass before the confessor could arrive; and Condé, in the meanwhile, applied himself diligently to temporal affairs. Gour-

¹ Madame de Sévigné, letter of December 13, 1686.

² Bergier, *La Vie et les Actions de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé*, published 1690. From this work are taken the details that follow, of Condé's last hours.

ville, the indispensable, was summoned for the last time : " Eh bien, Gourville, mon ami, c'en est fait ", was Condé's greeting ; " il faut nous séparer ". He insisted that a will, in which he left bequests to all his household, should be drawn up under his eyes. Gourville refused any legacy in money ; a proof of disinterestedness less striking than might appear at first sight. Experience had taught him that, with his gifts, he need never be in serious want of money ; what he required far more was the rehabilitation of a character considerably damaged by certain accusations of fraud which had been brought against him before he entered the Prince's service ; and this, Condé had done his best to secure, by a letter begging the Royal protection for the bearer, which Gourville, after his master's death, was to deliver to the King. This letter had been written some time previously, and was already in Gourville's possession. It contained another request, soon afterwards to be made known ; namely, that Madame la Princesse should on no account be permitted to leave Châteauroux, or to live under less restraint than in her husband's lifetime. Both prayers were duly granted. In the whole matter of his wife's imprisonment, Condé appears to have found a firm ally in the King. The arguments, or considerations, that influenced Louis are unknown ; but it is clear that he believed the Prince to be justified in the course he had taken, and against this conviction no protest from the Princess's kinsfolk could prevail.

Where his mission to the King was concerned, Gourville needed few instructions ; he knew what part he had to play. The business concluded in this farewell interview related almost entirely to the disposal of money ; besides legacies to the family and household, there were large sums left to the Church, and to the poor ; a special bequest was made for the building of a parish church at Chantilly. While Gourville pursued his task, Madame la Duchesse stood by, weeping bitterly ; in vain the Prince begged her to be comforted ; she had too much cause to know that she was losing the only protector who could stand between her and the increasing tyranny of Enghien. At length, the will was signed ; but there were still other temporal matters to be dealt with. With the confidence of a dying man, Condé resolved to make a final entreaty on behalf

of his nephew, and to save him, if possible, from a life of wasted hopes. "I must write to the King", he said to Bergier. The chaplain acted as secretary; and within an hour, the last letter had been dictated. In it, Condé tells the King of his desperate state; asks forgiveness, once more, for his long-past rebellion; and recalls, with dignified humility, his services to the Crown: "the fulfilment of those duties which my birth, and my zeal for Your Majesty's glory, laid upon me". Then, after much apology, he introduces the name of Conti—"a Prince, assuredly, of some merit"—and implores the King to restore to him "that which he values above all things, the honour of Your Majesty's favourable notice". "It may be that I ask too much", the appeal concludes; "but what can one not hope for, from the greatest King on earth".¹ The letter was sealed and laid aside, to be dispatched on the instant of the Prince's death.

For the rest of that day he continued, at intervals, to give directions to Bergier, and to Gourville; till ten o'clock in the evening, when he declared his worldly affairs completed, and that he thought nothing had been forgotten. "I left him at eleven o'clock", says Bergier; "he was sitting before the fire, in an arm-chair, with his feet on a folding-stool". About midnight, the chaplain was summoned again; there had been a change for the worse, and the Prince wished to make his confession without delay, while his mind was still clear. He confessed to Bergier, and, immediately afterwards, received the Viaticum. For this latter rite, as many of his household as were present at Fontainebleau assembled in the room; and when it was over, he called Bergier near to him, saying: "I cannot speak loud enough to be heard at a distance; but do you speak for me, and say, what is true, that I am grieved beyond measure at having, by word and deed, set a bad example to my neighbours, my servants, and my friends; and that I ask their pardon, as truly as I ask God to forgive my sins". The chaplain stayed with him for the greater part of the night, repeating the prayers for the dying, and the litany of the Saints; the Prince, who was fully conscious, made all the responses; he also asked repeatedly for Père Deschamps: "Je voudrais bien le voir, avant que de mourir".

¹ A.C., first published by Bergier.

At six in the morning, Enghien arrived, in a state of intense nervous emotion, bringing a message no less welcome than his presence. Louis, perhaps softened by a sense of his own danger, had anticipated the Prince's dying appeal, and now sent him word that "out of consideration for his wishes" a free pardon should be granted to Conti. The sight of his son, and the news that his dearest wish was fulfilled, seemed, for a moment, to renew Condé's fast-failing strength. His first act, on receiving the King's message, was to order the letter of the day before to be unsealed, that he might send his thanks, and a last assurance of his loyal devotion. It was well that he could not know how short-lived was the Royal pardon; nor what long years of disappointment awaited "that Prince born for renown".

When the letter to the King had been finally dispatched, Condé spoke with his son, for a short time, in Bergier's presence; later, he sent for Madame la Duchesse, and addressed them both, reminding them of "their duty to God, to the King, to their children, and to each other", and giving them his blessing "for themselves and for their children". Henri-Jules asked his father's pardon, for any time when he might have displeased him; and the Prince answered: "If I have been a good father to you, you have been a good son to me, and I die, as I have lived, full of affection for you". The exigencies of such a death-bed allowed no thought of sparing effort or agitation to a dying man. Conti's was the next arrival; he, too, must be blessed; and must be exhorted, in words which Condé, as though conscious of his own delayed repentance, reiterated earnestly: "*Il faut être homme de bien durant sa vie; il n'y a que cela de solide*". Midday brought the long-wished-for presence of Père Deschamps; he was hastily ushered into the room, and the Prince "stretched forth both hands, testifying his joy at seeing him". Deschamps' arrival was the signal for all but Bergier to withdraw. One brief interview was granted to the Duke and Duchess, and to Conti; but, for the last twelve hours of his life, Condé, by his own wish, saw no member of his family. Deschamps, Bergier, and the parish priest of Fontainebleau, he kept in close attendance. He spent nearly two hours alone with Deschamps, and made a second confession,

to him ; at evening, the other priests returned, and all three prayed with him, recommending him to " the protection of the Blessed Virgin, of his Guardian Angel, and of St. Louis, from whom he had the honour to be descended, and whose name he bore ". As they recited the *Miserere*, he stopped them at the eleventh verse—' *Cor mundum crea in me Deus* '—and seemed to meditate : " I never truly doubted the Mysteries of the Faith ", he said ; " and now, less than ever ; all grows clearer in my mind. ' *Videbimus eum sicuti est, et facie ad faciem* ' ". Throughout the night, the prayers continued, and he spoke again, two or three times ; then, towards dawn, as the thirty-first psalm was read : " In te, Domine, speravi, non confundar in æternum ", he added audibly : " In justitia tua libera me ". These were his last words. Some two hours later, he died peacefully ; with so little outward sign that, for a time, the priests prayed on, not knowing that the end had come.

In accordance with the wishes expressed by the Prince on his death-bed, his body was laid in the ancestral vault at Valery ; an ancient fief in the province of Bourbonnais, long held by the branch of Bourbon-Condé, and used by the Princes of Condé as a burial-place. His heart was given to the Jesuits of Paris, and was for years enshrined in their church in the Rue St. Antoine ; it has since been removed to Chantilly, and now reposes in the Castle chapel ; where, on each anniversary of his death, a Mass is said for his soul.

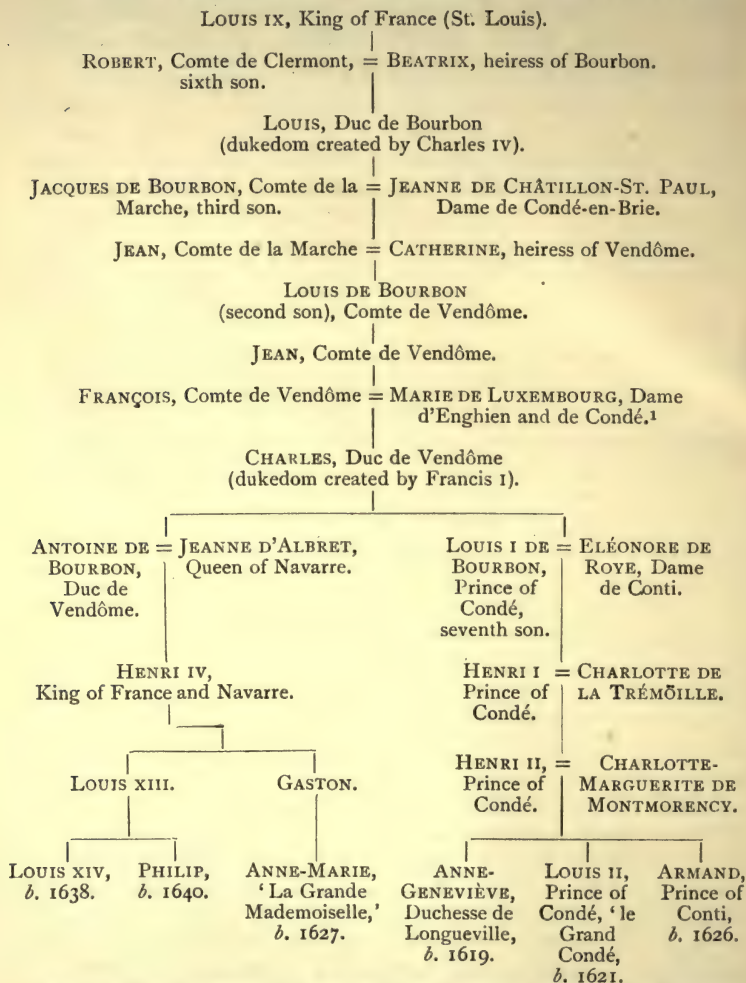
No grander, or more fitting, monument exists to the memory of the Great Condé than Chantilly, as it stands to-day. Here, beside the chapel, are the gardens which he planned and loved ; his room, bearing the inscription, ' *La Chambre de M. le Prince* ',—all other holders of the title are ignored ; and the magnificent ' *Galerie où sont Peintes les Actions de M. le Prince* ', in the decoration of which Henri-Jules found scope both for his filial pride and his artistic tastes. Here, too, are the bust of the Prince by Coysevox, and his portrait by the younger Teniers ; two of the most vivid presentments of that arresting face and form. Yet, when all is seen, and said, it is clear that Condé is still pre-eminently of those whose greatest qualities are the hardest to convey to posterity. What power can recall the vivacity of that ' great Prince, of infinite wit ', whose conversation

fascinated, when other attributes might repel, and whose genius could stimulate those who loved him least? Not all the glories of Chantilly, not all the eloquence of Bossuet, can do more than bring before us a faint reflection of the compelling gift, which, in actual fight, placed him even above Turenne; that which caused men to look on him, at such times, as more than human; and which led St. Évremond to exalt 'le plaisir de le voir' above every other reward to which Condé's friends and followers could aspire.

APPENDIX A

GENEALOGICAL TABLES OF THE HOUSE OF CONDÉ

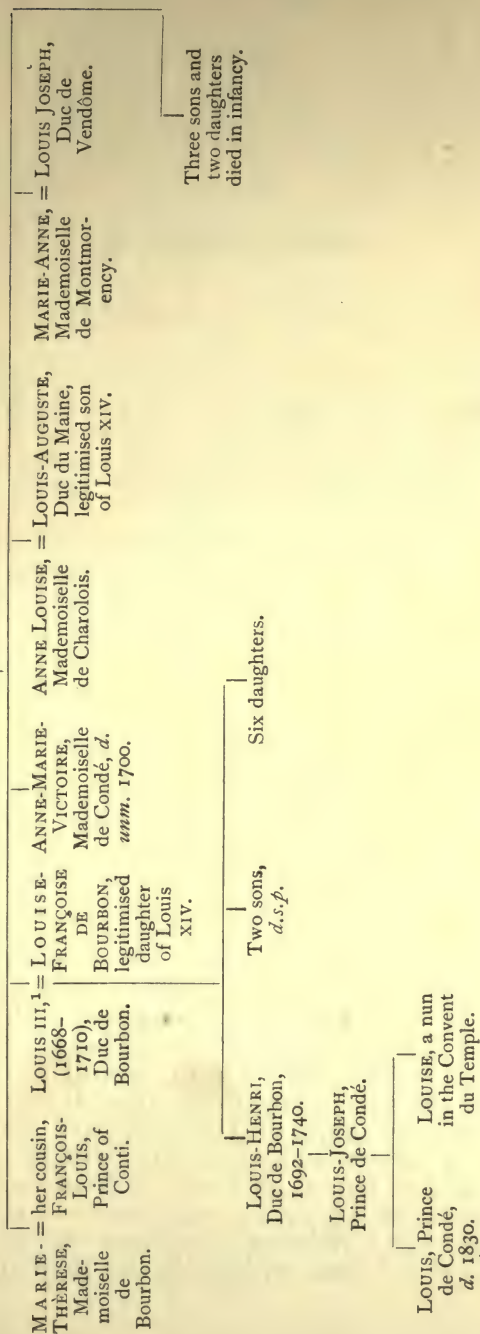
I. TABLE SHOWING THE DESCENT OF THE HOUSE OF CONDÉ, ITS CONNECTION WITH THE ROYAL BRANCH OF THE BOURBONS, AND THE ACQUISITION, BY MARRIAGE, OF VARIOUS FAMILY TITLES



¹ Condé on the Scheldt. It is generally believed, though not absolutely proved, that the Princes of Condé took their title from this town, and not from that of Condé-en-Brie.

II. TABLE SHOWING THE LATER GENERATIONS OF THE HOUSE OF CONDÉ.

LOUIS II, Prince of Condé = CLAIRE - CLÉMENTE DE
MAILLÉ-Brézé.
(1621-1686).
HENRI-JULES, Prince de Condé = ANNE, Princess of Bavaria.
(1643-1709).



¹ By the wish of Louis XIV, this Prince retained the title of Duc de Bourbon after his father's death, and was never known as Prince of Condé. His son followed his example, but his grandson (Louis-Joseph) reverted to the original title of their branch.

APPENDIX B

BATTLE OF ROCROY

THE origin of nearly all later accounts of the Battle of Rocroy may be traced either to the *Relation* of La Moussaye or to the *Memoirs of Sirot*. Each of these two documents is the record of an eye-witness ; and, as such, they deserve consideration before all others relating to the event.

The manuscript of La Moussaye's narrative, which contains a complete account of the campaigns of Rocroy and Fribourg, was preserved among the *Archives of Chantilly*. Désormeaux, the biographer of Condé, and the librarian of Chantilly, states positively that the *Relation* among the family papers was written by La Moussaye. In his biography of Condé (published 1766), he refers to it as the ' *Récit de la Campagne de Rocroy, par M. de la Moussaye* ' ; adding, that this same narrative has been ' *revue et publiée par M. de la Chapelle* '. In 1672, a printed version of the *Relation* had made its appearance ; freely edited by Henri de Bessé, Sieur de la Chapelle, and dedicated to the Duc d'Enghien, son of the Great Condé. La Chapelle introduces his publication as a manuscript ' which has fallen into his hands ', but without giving the name of the real author. La Moussaye had taken arms against the Court, and his last years had been spent under a cloud ; these facts may account for the omission. The editor has tampered with the style of several passages, and introduced certain comments on contemporary politics ; but the greater part of the narrative remains unchanged. This version was incorporated in the *Histoire de la Vie et des Actions de Louis de Bourbon, Prince de Condé*, published in 1694 ; and, under the somewhat misleading title, *Relation du Sieur de la Chapelle*, soon became far more widely known than the original

manuscript. Modern historians, such as the Duc d'Aumale, and MM. Chéruel and Victor Cousin, partly guided by the evidence of Ramsay¹ and Désormeaux, have once more brought forward the authentic version, and established its claims. M. Chéruel, whose authority on such matters is universally recognised, accepts La Moussaye's narrative, without reserve, as a trustworthy account of the battle; supplementing it, however, with the *Memoirs of Sirot*, for the incidents which took place on the left wing. La Moussaye, as aide-de-camp, was at Enghien's side during the whole action, and is consequently able to give few details as to what occurred on the left, during the earlier part of the day. "No one", to quote the verdict of M. Chéruel, "was better qualified to know the character of the Duc d'Enghien, to explain his designs, and to describe his actions. It might be possible to question the impartiality of a man so devoted to his leader; but the note of simplicity, of sincerity, and military frankness, which echoes in the *Memoirs of La Moussaye*, inspires confidence: a feeling which is amply justified by the comparison of his works with other contemporary documents".²

The *Memoirs of Sirot* were printed for the first time, in 1683. His account of the battle deals exclusively with the events of which he was an eye-witness; namely, the defeat of the French left, and the part played by the reserve. He had every reason to be satisfied with his own share in the action; still, it can scarcely be denied that he does that share something more than justice; not so much by what he records of himself, as by what he omits to record of others. His narrative does not contradict that of La Moussaye, but simply ignores those incidents in which he himself had no hand. We hear of his valiant stand against Isembourg, which is spoken of also by La Moussaye; but there is no mention of the attack on the enemy's rear, by the cavalry of the French right. On the contrary, Sirot conveys the impression that Isembourg was defeated, and put to flight, by him alone. "The whole of the enemy's right wing", he says, "fell upon the reserve which I was commanding ;

¹ In the *Histoire du Vicomte de Turenne*, by the Chevalier Ramsay (1735), the narrative, freely quoted in his account of the battle of Fribourg, is referred to simply as the 'Récit de M. de la Moussaye'.

² *Histoire de la Minorité de Louis XIV.*

but I was fortunate enough to support their attack, and even to beat them ". At the same time, he allows that " Gassion and the Duc d'Enghien had put the Spanish centre to flight ", and refers to the Duke's appearance on the left of the field, in the later part of the action. With regard to the stand of the ' tercios viejos ', Sirot says nothing of the first three charges, which took place before he came up. He merely states that he found the Spanish square already much shaken ; though by whose attack he does not say ; and that he charged so vigorously as to break the ranks. La Moussaye agrees in saying that it was the arrival of the reserve which put the last touch to the Spaniards' weakened resistance ; but he adds that a great part of Gassion's cavalry had returned from their pursuit on the right ; that they were helping to surround the square, and certainly took part in the final charge. The official account, published by the Government in the *Gazette de Renaudot*, just a week after the battle, follows La Moussaye's account of the French squadrons falling upon Isembourg in the rear. The actual breaking of the ' tercios ' is here attributed to " the cavalry of the right wing, led by the Sieur de Gassion ". Enghien himself was not leading the last charge ; this is pointed out by La Moussaye, who explains the misunderstanding which caused the attack to be made, after the Spaniards had called for quarter.

The detractors of Enghien, and those who have wished to exalt Gassion at his expense, found their observations on the *Memoirs* of Monglat. François de Paule de Clermont, Marquis de Monglat, died in 1675 ; his *Memoirs* were first published in 1727. Monglat, who shares L'Hôpital's view of Enghien's tactics, states, firstly, that the Duke should not have offered battle to Melo at all ; secondly, that the manœuvre which saved the day was devised and carried out by Gassion alone ; thirdly, that the message sent to Sirot came directly from Enghien, and was an order to come to the support of L'Hôpital. Sirot himself is clearly of opinion that the so-called order did not emanate from the Duke ; moreover, La Vallière's efforts were to make him retreat, instead of advancing. Monglat was not an eye-witness, and does not give any authority for his information. He assigns no post to the Duke during the action ; and he describes the

manœuvre which he attributes to Gassion as 'turning to the right' instead of to the left; 'erreur un peu forte', as M. Cousin, the champion of the House of Condé, observes. Moreover, if, as Monglat asserts, Gassion, "instead of pursuing Alburquerque's squadrons, allowed them to continue their flight, while he rallied all his troops, and marched to take the enemy in the rear", no force would have been left to keep guard against Beck, or to bring the news of his retreat.

That the success of the day was owing, in part, to Gassion's counsels, no one will deny; the Duke himself admits it, with a frankness which should disarm accusations. But it must be remembered that it was he, Enghien, who was the superior officer, and that in the case of any difference of opinion, his word was law. If, in the excitement of the moment, he had thought well to continue the pursuit, no subordinate could have stopped him. Gassion might make suggestions, but it was only with the Duke's consent, and by his orders, that they could be carried out. La Moussaye is therefore justified in calling attention to "the coolness and presence of mind maintained by the Duc d'Enghien, even in the hottest of the fight, and especially when the enemy's left wing was routed; for, instead of being carried away by the pursuit, he turned against the infantry". Whether the manœuvre was first actually suggested by Enghien or by Gassion, is not, and cannot be, certainly known. The credit of its adoption must be given to Enghien; that of its execution is divided between the two.

It only remains to add that the views of Monglat, though possibly shared by the House of Orleans, seem to have had little or no effect on contemporary opinion. Even the lampooners of the Fronde leave to Condé the glory of Rocroy.

APPENDIX C

FUNERAL CEREMONIES; FROM THE *GAZETTE*, JANUARY 11, 1687

FROM THE ' POMPE FUNÈBRE DE LOUIS DE BOURBON,
PREMIER PRINCE DU SANG '. *Gazette du 11 Janvier*,
1687

ENSUITE les Gentilshommes tirèrent le corps du chariot, et le portèrent sur une estrade de trois degrez, couverte d'un dais en forme de lit à pentes de velours noir, à frange d'argent, orné d'écussons en broderie. Le premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre, le Capitaine des Gardes, et le premier Escuyer marchaient derrière le corps ; qui fut couvert d'un poêle de velours noir, avec une grande croix de moire d'argent, garnie d'écussons en broderie aux quatre costez, avec un bord d'hermine de huit doigts de haut. La Couronne, le Manteau de Prince du Sang, le Collier de l'Ordre, le Cordon bleu, et l'Espée du Prince furent mis sur un carreau de velours au pied du cercueil. Tout le contour de l'estrade estoit garni de trois rangs de chandeliers d'argent, ainsi que toute l'Eglise qui étoit tendue de noir jusqu'au voûtes, avec deux lez de velours chargez d'écussons.

L'Archevesque de Sens fit les prières et les encensements ordinaires, apres quoy il se retira.

Le 23 à huit heures du matin, ensuite des Vigiles, l'Archevesque de Sens commença la grande Messe. Les principaux Officiers du Prince se mirent derrière le corps. Le Roy d'Armes estoit à sa place ordinaire. Les quatre Hérauds et les quatre Aumoniers estoient au coin de l'estrade. Trois gentilshommes allèrent à l'offrande. Le sieur de la Noue porta le cierge, le sieur de Saint Laurent porta le pain, et le sieur de la Mothe-Férensac porta le vin.

A la fin de la Messe, l'Archevesque officiant fit les encensements, les aspersions, et les prières ordinaires, apres lesquelles l'Ayde des cérémonies leva toutes les pièces d'honneur.

Il donna la Couronne au Comte de Moreuil, le manteau au Comte de Briolle, l'espée au Comte de Lanmarie, le Cordon bleu et le Collier au Chevalier de Blanchefort.

Ensuite, le Roy d'Armes s'estant mis au costé droit de l'Autel sur le bord du caveau, cria à haute voix, *Gentilshommes du feu Prince de Condé, Premier Prince du Sang, venez luy rendre les derniers devoirs.* Alors, les Gentilshommes levèrent le Corps, and le portèrent derrière l'Autel à l'entrée du Caveau. Les sieurs de Verveillon, des Chapiseaux, de Cardelan, et de la Vergne, soutenait les quatre coins du poêle.

Le Roy d'Armes, ayant mis son chaperon sur le corps, cria, *Héraud d'Armes de France du titre de Saintonge, venez faire votre devoir,* et aussitot il descendit dans le caveau pour recevoir le corps. Lorsque le Héraud fut descendu, on y descendit le corps. Ensuite, le Roy d'Armes cria, *Hérauds d'Armes de France des titres de Charolois, Picardie, et Roussillon, venez à votre office, apportez vos chaperons sur le corps du premier Prince du Sang de France,* ce qu'ils firent. En mesme temps, le Roy d'Armes cria trois fois à haute voix, *le premier Prince du Sang est mort.* Ensuite, il appella les Honneurs en cette manière. *Monsieur de Férensac, représentant Monsieur de Ricousse premier Maistre d'Hostel du premier Prince du Sang, apportez le bâton. Monsieur Sanguin, apportez le bâton de Capitaine des Gardes du premier Prince du Sang. Monsieur le Chevalier de Blanchefort, apportez le Cordon bleu et le Collier de l'Ordre du premier Prince du Sang. Monsieur le Comte de Lanmarie, apportez l'epée du premier Prince du Sang. Monsieur le Comte de Briolle apportez le manteau, Monsieur le Comte de Moreuil premier Gentilhomme de la Chambre du premier Prince du Sang, apportez la Couronne.* Toutes ces marques d'honneur ayant été aportées, furent reçues par le Roy d'Armes sur un taffetas noir, and mise entre les mains du Héraud du titre de Saintonge, qui les posa sur le cercueil. Ensuite, le Roy d'Armes cria, *Officiers sous la charge du premier Maistre d'Hostel du défunt premier Prince du Sang, avancez-vous :* ce qu'ils firent. Alors, le sieur de Féren-

sac, qui en faisoit la charge, leur cria à haute voix, *le premier Prince du Sang, vostre Maistre and le mien est mort, nous n'avons plus de Maistre, sa Maison est rompue, pourvoyez-vous.* Le Capitaine des Gardes et le premier Maistre d'Hostel, rompirent leur bâtons et les mirent sur le cerceuil.

Après ces cérémonies, le Roy d'Armes cria trois fois, *le premier Prince du Sang est mort, prions Dieu pour le repos de son âme.* L'Archevesque de Sens s'estant ensuite avancé sur le bord du caveau, y jetta trois fois de la terre, fit les dernières bénédictions : et après le *De Profundis*, un des Hérauds présenta l'aspersoir aux Officiers selon leur rang, et ainsi finit la cérémonie.

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